

“Out of the Abundance of the Heart”



FROM HEART TO HEART

Edifying and Refreshing
— Selections from the —

Writings and Addresses

OF

Dr. THOMAS NEATBY, London

Author of

“From Glory to Glory,” “Our Lord’s Coming Again,” etc.

(WITH BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH)



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AGE ABOUT 40.

THOMAS NEATBY:

A MEMOIR.*

I.

THOMAS NEATBY was a Yorkshireman. His native place was Worsboro', a picturesque village that crowns a hill round which winds the road that connects Barnsley with Sheffield. The date of his birth was August 1st, 1835; and if the register was correctly kept he was christened on the following day at the parish church, of which the beautiful spire is a conspicuous landmark for many miles round.

He came of a religious and evangelical stock. His grandfather, Joseph Neatby, who lived in the Rotherham district, was profoundly respected for his religious character; and his grandmother, whose maiden name was, I believe, Sarah Clarke, appears to have been fully worthy of her husband. A story, illustrating God's care for them in their old age, was often related by my father. They were sitting together in their little home facing want, their purse empty and their cupboard bare. Suddenly the door was pushed ajar; an unrecognised hand flung a small packet into the middle of the room, and closed the door again. When the packet was

* I beg to acknowledge gratefully the kindness of Messrs. Morgan & Scott, who have allowed me to repeat, at my discretion, a good many sentences that appeared in the shorter memoir written by me for the *Christian* towards the close of last year.

picked up it was found to bear the inscription, "For the aged pilgrims living in this house." It contained a small sum, I think a few shillings.

They had evidently carefully concealed their straitness from their two sons, Thomas and William. William, however, one day discovered it, and immediately communicated with Thomas; and the thrifty and dutiful young men at once arranged for a sufficient and stated supply for their parents' wants.

The younger son, William, was a man in whom geniality tempered great force of will. He had suavity, kindness and *savoir faire* in no common degree, and he pushed his way steadily in the world. Born early in 1807, he married at the age of 23, and his eldest son, Joseph, was born at the close of 1830. His next two sons died in infancy. Then came the subject of this sketch, and last of all Samuel, in 1837. Joseph, Thomas and Samuel were all reserved for long periods of Christian service.

William Neatby's wife was Ann Mossforth, of Worsboro'. She had been converted, the first of her family, at a revival in the dales, and she and her husband forgathered through their common enthusiasm for the work of God, which was being prosecuted with great zeal and fervour in the neighbourhood by the followers of John Wesley, himself at that time less than 40 years deceased.

William Neatby was a hereditary Baptist, and retained so much sympathy with the principles in which he had been reared that he abstained from attending Thomas's christening; but his wife was determined to obtain for her children the only form of birth-registration that was then available. The ecclesiastical connections of the family were with the

Wesleyans, whose fervent evangelism powerfully attracted them. Mr. Neatby became a local preacher, and at a later period shared with Mr. James Taylor (father of the revered J. Hudson Taylor) a unique position of esteem among the lay preachers of their communion in the Barnsley district. His labours covered about half a century, though in his closing years they were much restricted by failing health. The last three or four years of his life, which closed in 1880, were spent in fellowship with the "Brethren." *

This change was doubtless due in great measure to the influence of his second surviving son. The mutual esteem of son and father was very deep. I have heard the father pay in public a noble tribute to the son; and the son was wont to say that his father, but for persecution that befell him at times for righteousness' sake, would have incurred the woe denounced against those of whom all men speak well.

The first ten years of my father's life were spent in his native village. His father had become agent to the squire of Worsboro', who seems to have been a fairly considerable employer of labour, and the squire trusted his agent as Potiphar trusted Joseph. Rambles in the delightful neighbourhood were the joy of the boy's life, and the influence of his rural surroundings must have contributed to form the passionate love of Nature that lasted all his days. An interesting reference to these pleasures will be found in a letter printed on page 35.

* In the delightful volume that has been recently issued by my friend, Dr. Howard Taylor, dealing with his father's early life, my grandfather's association with Brethren is, by some oversight, antedated by a very long period.

He had in that earliest period of life two very narrow escapes from death. He and his brothers had to take a daily walk to school over the three miles of hill and dale that lie between Worsboro' and Barnsley. One winter's evening Thomas was caught in a snowstorm in a lonely spot, and sank down overpowered. His father and some friends, in anxious search, discovered the little lad as the snow was falling fast upon him, and bore him home with thankful hearts. I believe the weakness that then overtook him was due to the approach of typhoid fever. An extremely severe epidemic of that fell disease raged in the Worsboro' district, and my father used to speak of himself as one of the few survivors of what must have been a fearful visitation. He hung for some time between life and death, and the impressions left upon his mind were indelible. Chief among them was the ever-cherished memory of his mother's gentle ministries, and of her sympathetic voice as she repeated the tender and majestic words of the Thirtieth Psalm. His love for her endured as a life-long passion.

Those were days of spiritual power and frequent "revival" among the hills and valleys of South Yorkshire, and during a mission held at the village of Worsboro' Bridge, where William Neatby and his family worshipped, young Joseph and Thomas (who was then but 9 years old) professed their faith in Christ. Through life, my father continued to refer the decisive change to that period.

In 1845, William Neatby encountered a part of the persecution that his son spoke of as having occasionally befallen him. The squire's wife, acting under the influence of a zealous curate, prevailed on her

husband to discharge all the Dissenters in his employ. Before the notice had taken effect the squire thought better of it, at least so far as my grandfather was concerned, and urged him to allow the notice to be cancelled ; but in vain. The family removed for a short time to Rotherham, but in 1846 settled in Barnsley, where Mr. Neatby had purchased a timber mill and business. The business was almost derelict, but in his energetic hands it speedily became a thoroughly prosperous enterprise.

II.

Town-life has its compensations even for the most ardent lover of the sights and sounds of the countryside, and the family found in Barnsley a great enlargement of the circle of its friends. My father formed then the acquaintance of two men whose extraordinary gifts and grace abide as cherished memories of the whole Evangelical Church—J. Hudson Taylor and Benjamin Broomhall. Full indeed must have been the tide of spiritual life in that favoured district to bring together three youths, all destined in their various degrees to exercise deep and wide spiritual influence, and all characterised by a piety so ardent, so early, and so lasting.

The friends were scattered ere long, but the friendships, though for a time held in abeyance by distance and other circumstances, were in later middle-life powerfully revived ; and the last survivor of the group cherished the memory of them till the close of his days as amongst the greatest privileges and delights of his life. There was nothing he could have valued more (except to have had a share

himself in the enterprise) than to be so closely associated with men who had devoted such noble lives, with so signal success, to the cause that lay nearest of all to his own heart—the proclamation of Christ's message throughout the heathen world.

In 1849 a great controversy, which for a time threatened the total disruption of Wesleyan Methodism, resulted in a large secession. William Neatby and James Taylor cast in their lot with the seceders. Thus it happened that when Thomas was called upon, at the age of 17, to preach his "trial sermon," it was addressed to a company of the Wesleyan Reform Connexion. His text, as I learned from a veteran who was present, was Hebrews xi. 24-26—"rather a big text for such a young man," quizzically observed my informant, who was nevertheless greatly impressed with the power of the youthful candidate. But my father's experience as a local preacher among the Wesleyan Reformers was brief. His mind was moving in quite a different theological direction. The type of Calvinism, firm though not extreme, to which the principles of Methodism are apt to appear "legal," was fast claiming him. This appeared, much to the offence of his ecclesiastical superiors, in his objections to the Methodist hymn book (though he was always profoundly sensible of the peculiar beauty of many characteristic Wesleyan hymns), and in the independent views he expressed as to the obligation of the Sabbath. He probably only fulfilled an inevitable course when, under the influence of his friend Hudson Taylor, he became associated with the Brethren. This association, which was a mere passing phase with Mr. Taylor, determined the course of his friend's entire life.

The two young men shared an ambition to devote themselves to the work of medical missions in China, and it was with this object that Neatby sought his father's permission to undertake the study of medicine. Taylor was leaving the situation of assistant to Dr. Hardey, of Hull, where he had passed through the interesting experiences recorded in his reminiscences, and his friend became his successor. Neatby was afterwards articled to a doctor in Banbury—an engagement ultimately cancelled, without any unfriendliness, owing to the doctor's objection to being twitted by his medical friends with having an assistant that preached in the open air.

My father left Banbury too late for the beginning of the winter session at the medical schools of London. As the Scotch session began somewhat later, he entered himself at Edinburgh University, and completed a year's study there. It was during this period that the earliest of his printed pieces appeared. His mother had died in February, 1858, and on the first anniversary of his great loss he composed a little memorial poem, or hymn. It is reprinted in this volume (see page 48), partly as a characteristic expression of the filial love that was a lasting passion with its author; partly as showing how deep, far below all the surface variations of his career, was the unity of his own spiritual life.

In later days he wrote very few verses, and published none. He laid no claim to the honours of a poet; and being one of those happy people who can enjoy a joke against themselves, he was wont to relate that on one occasion, when he had shown a copy of boyish verses to Hudson Taylor, his friend had returned them with the remark, "I think you

will excel in prose." Nevertheless, the lines on his mother's departure are not ill composed.

He chose St. Bartholomew's Hospital for the completion of his medical course. In London he found a warm welcome from the late Andrew Miller, who by reason partly of the really extraordinary blessing that attended his evangelistic ministry, and partly of his character as "the host of the whole Church," occupied a niche quite his own among the "exclusive" Brethren in those days.

My father qualified as a surgeon in 1860, and in the following year graduated as M.D. at the University of St. Andrews. By that time he had become engrossed in work among the "Brethren" in London, and his plans for China were slowly abandoned. He settled in Camden Road, and commenced a practice that was carried on until his final retirement from professional work in 1894. His residence was removed in 1866 to 29 Thurlow Road, Hampstead, where he had his home for 28 years. He was a most enthusiastic physician and a convinced homœopathist, and he held his scientific opinions with the unwavering assurance that characterised his religious convictions.

III.

A large practice kept him exceedingly busy, but it never hindered him from prosecuting the ministry with the utmost vigour. He had as great a store of nervous energy as any man I ever met or heard of, and this enabled him not only to accomplish an extraordinary amount of work, but to throw into every subsidiary operation more enthusiasm than

most men display in the main undertaking of their lives. In the open ministry of the Sunday morning he almost always took a considerable share. A Sunday evening for which he was not announced to conduct a meeting was a rarity ; and he accepted numerous appointments for the week evenings. He made himself an accomplished French scholar in order to qualify for ministry among the Assemblies of French-speaking Switzerland—a work that occupied much of his annual holiday. With a similar object he acquired a respectable knowledge of German ; but I do not remember that he ever extended his work far in German districts. Whether he ever actually preached in German I am not sure. He spent the winter of 1875-76 in the South of France for the benefit of his health, and exercised, in spite of the need for rest, a fairly extensive ministry. When, in April, 1885, he was laid low by a paralytic stroke, the only wonder of his friends was that the blow had not come sooner.

The year 1881 witnessed the beginning of the total disruption of Mr. Darby's following. My father viewed Mr. Darby's line of action with extreme disapproval, and took a leading part in the opposing movement, which is generally named after Mr. William Kelly. Little as he then expected it, his action was really a step towards the total repudiation of the "exclusive" discipline. For this measure he began to plead in 1886, and as Mr. Kelly and most of those associated with him would not entertain the proposal, Dr. Neatby's connection with them ceased from January, 1887. His position among them had been one of considerable prominence, and on the occasion of a conference in London of the

entire community, he was the chosen preacher for the first day, being followed on the second by the late excellent William Burbidge. Mr. Kelly was probably the selector.

This second painful severance of old and cherished ties came at a time when he was physically ill-qualified to endure the strain. His paralytic stroke had been a severe one, and expert opinion had been quite unfavourable to the prospect of any considerable measure of recovery. But the patient, though greatly shattered in other respects, appeared to have lost nothing of his indomitable will. He set himself resolutely to exercise the affected parts, and recovered to a wonderful degree the use of the voice and the leg. Even the arm became not unserviceable, though he was never able to write with it again. His left hand, however, "understudied" the right with wonderful efficiency, as those who received letters from him in his later years will not need to be told. But however much better, in the goodness of God, the event proved than our fears had foreboded, the invalid's ceaseless itinerations, and his innumerable discourses and pamphlets, represent an output of energy scarcely credible in the circumstances.

From the time of his severance from Mr. Kelly's party, he placed his ministry at the disposal of all evangelical people who might desire it, and he actually took part in many undenominational conventions. He made warm friends in various communions, and was to the utmost of his power a helper of all Gospel enterprise, without restriction of sect. But it was among the "Open Brethren" that his help was chiefly in demand, and among them accordingly that he principally laboured. And yet

his relation to the Brethren was apt to be a little perplexing. On the one hand he always attended, as far as possible, their Sunday morning worship, and was a constant speaker at their public conferences. Moreover, he held to the last that the weekly observance of the Lord's Supper in association with "liberty of ministry" was the Scriptural rule, and a matter of high privilege. On the other hand, he would strenuously deny that he "belonged to the Brethren."

The explanation will be found in a tract, reprinted almost in extenso in the present volume (p. 71), entitled, "Gathering in the Name of the Lord Jesus." It is an account of the convictions held through all his adult life on the ecclesiastical question. From a study of this little pamphlet it will appear that, on the one hand, he dreaded the virtual establishment of a new denomination, which might claim from its members a special share of the loyalty and loving interest that ought, in his judgment, to be bestowed in absolutely equal measure on all Christians whatsoever; and that on the other hand he abhorred the claim of any exclusive title to gather in the name of the Lord Jesus. That, he held, was the prerogative of all true Christian hearts, and could not possibly be taken as distinctive of any Christians in particular, no matter how fully he might agree with their convictions as to worship and ministry.

It is of course well-known that many of the most respected of those called Open Brethren are in perfect accord with these views; but it is a rare thing to find any Christian as entirely free as he was from the denominational spirit and outlook. Opinions differ among Christians as to the general

desirability of an altogether undenominational standpoint ; but no one who knew Dr. Neatby in his later phase could doubt that it is perfectly possible, and that he actually occupied it. The relation of any man to Christ was, in sober truth, the one thing about him that interested my father.

It would, nevertheless, be equally an ungracious and an untrue thing to make light of the close and tender tie between him and the people among whom by far the larger part of his ministry was, for nearly a quarter of a century, exercised. They showed him the utmost affection and kindness, and he most thoroughly reciprocated their cordial feelings. Had it only been for their noble exertions for the evangelisation of the heathen world, he would have been powerfully drawn to them, but as a matter of fact almost their entire theological standpoint was his own ; so much so that it was with great reason that he was reckoned to them by general public opinion.

Of recent years his activities were much more circumscribed. Failing health compelled him to take great care during the cold season, and he often wintered on the Continent. But even there, he frequently found openings for his ministry. Wherever he was, he would let no opportunity slip ; and the end found him with his zeal for the ministry of Christ unabated.

He passed away peacefully in the early morning of Sunday, November 12th, 1911, at his home in Highgate, after an illness of a few days. His loving and self-forgetful interest in all his friends had never been more conspicuous than at the last.

Dr. Neatby married, in October, 1862, the elder daughter of his ever dear friend, Mr. Andrew Miller.

Within the following 21 years twelve children were born to him. Six sons and three daughters survive him.

IV.

Two of the pieces that follow this memoir were occasioned by great sorrows that befell him. "Nothing counts but Christ" was composed on the occasion of the death of his father-in-law in 1883; while the death of his fifth son in 1884 gave rise to the meditation entitled, "I shall be satisfied" (see p. 57).

Though my father issued many tracts and booklets, he was the author of only one considerable book. This he published in 1877, under the title of "Our Lord's Coming Again." The theme of which it treats occupied a great part of his thought and his ministry.* His teaching upon it followed closely the lines of Mr. Darby's. It is represented in this volume by an extract entitled, "The Coming of Christ for the Church."

The extracts here preserved from "Deliverance by Dying" really represent a relatively early phase of his ministry, the tract under that title being closely modelled on a series of articles published in 1884 in the *Christian Testimony*, a periodical of which he and Mr. Burbidge were joint-editors.

In early life Dr. Neatby's preaching was intensely theological. It was no other than theological to the close; yet it gained, not in warmth or passion (those it had always), but in a certain winning simplicity that endeared him to Christians of every degree of intelligence.

*A volume of addresses entitled, "From Glory to Glory," is in circulation.—ED.

In regard to its specific character the present writer could not trust himself to offer more than a very few hints. The extracts that follow, selected with great care by my mother, with the object of producing a correct general impression of my father's character and teaching, will more than supply, I trust, my lack of service. He was not what would usually be called an orator. His addresses neither had nor aimed at having rhetorical grace or finish. And yet few reputed orators touch their hearers' hearts more deeply. The late Dr. Pierson, when thanked for his kindness in visiting my father who had been taken ill at Keswick, declared that he esteemed the visit a great privilege to himself ; there were very few, he said, whose words moved him as Dr. Neatby's did. This experience was common to small and great among my father's hearers. Perhaps the explanation lay in that which was generally felt to be the outstanding characteristic of his ministry—the passion for Christ with which it was aflame. It was that surely that drew so closely to him the men and women whose hearts God had touched.

Few that knew him would suspect me of mere partiality if I said that I had scarcely heard the preacher whose words were marked by this passion in quite the same degree ; and yet I think it was matched by another that has attracted less attention —by the passion for righteousness. The two are not indistinguishable ; alas ! they scarcely seem inseparable. Dr. Fairbairn has even remarked on the exceptional character of the combination of a robust ethical conscience with a deep mystical vein. "Mystical" is an ambiguous word ; it was a word



AGE ABOUT 20.



AGE ABOUT 68.

moreover that my father did not love. Yet if it be understood in the sense in which Dr. Fairbairn employed it, the combination he refers to appeared in remarkable completeness in Thomas Neatby. It produced a profound and ineffaceable impression on the present writer when he was a boy, and it will always constitute for him one of the deepest of the countless debts he owes to the life he has here attempted to sketch.

He has assuredly no wish to depreciate any of the earnest and gifted ministers of the New Covenant at whose feet he sat in his childhood ; he remembers gratefully the power and grace of not a few. But one-sidedness is the bane of all thought, and it was far more due to his father than to all his other teachers put together that he was saved from the rash conclusion that men have to choose between grace and righteousness as ruling passions. It is at least a historical certainty that evangelical men have left to others with tragical frequency the work of pleading passionately for right as right. Passion for Christ seemed to mean in my father what assuredly it ought always to mean—the blending, as nearly complete as human frailty allows, of the passion for grace, the passion for righteousness, the passion for infinite loveliness. This avowal is made in the belief that many will sympathise with it ; and this memorial sketch is offered to the many who loved its subject well. It has been a comfort to offer to his memory, nay, rather to the ever-living grace that was with him, this little tribute—“perchance a frail memorial, but sincere,” God knows.

W. B. N.

EXTRACTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

Letters to M. J. N.

7th September, 1861.

We have an eternity of love before us—let us bless the Lord for such a prospect, and may some rays of its glory be now thrown athwart our path—nay, may we walk in its unclouded light until He who is now *in* us the *Hope* of Glory become the glory itself—Haste blessed day! Haste Thee, blessed Jesus, Thou whose love has won our hearts though we have never seen Thee!

11th September, 1861.

If we are much in the company of one we greatly respect and love, we shall get something at least of them about us, and oh, if we are much with Jesus whom we *worship* and whose love for us (many waters cannot quench it) has called out our love, we shall bear the marks of having “been with Jesus.” But oh! that first face-to-face gaze! Let us press on to it! Let us hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus! Love must be pained, away from its object, but oh, when it gets it what a burst of joy!

“ Ah blessed Lord, we little dreamed,
Of such a morn as this,
Such rivers of unmingled joy,
Such full *unbounded* bliss.”

12th September, 1861.

John had many things to say, but would not with paper and ink, but trusted shortly to speak with them face to face that "our joy may be full." And methinks, our Beloved has many things to say "face to face," "mouth to mouth," unheard of accents of grace and love to the Bride of His once toiling, then satisfied heart, secret ministrations from Himself to individuals whom He loved and gave Himself for, "a white stone with a new name," too precious to be whispered. Oh what will Jesus have to say to us that "our joy may be full." How soon shall we find ourselves in the midst of it!

14th September, 1861.

Oh what a night this must be on the sea—it is boiling and roaring. I love to watch the mighty waves lashing the pier and the rocks, and splashing to an awful height. The Majesty of Him whom my heart is taught to own as my Father is to me a *very* pleasing subject of contemplation. The breath that troubles these mighty waters is that which whispered gentle accents of peace to my troubled heart and conscience, when a suppliant I first bowed at the footstool of His mercy, and which in mental and moral storms, in troubles that might have broken my heart, has calmed my agitated, sorrowful soul so gently that had it been the first time I might scarce have known whence so soft a breath came.

8th October, 1861.

Jesus is perfect repose, "in the Lord have I righteousness and strength." Oh, the precious

fulness of Jesus ! How very present in all the need of the soul, present, blessed be His name, not merely for its *need*, but for its "fulness of joy." Oh the peace of His presence ! Be it ours more and more. How earnestly I desire for you the "best gifts," nay above and beyond this, the "more excellent way," viz., the fulness of divine Love which "never faileth," even when "hope" has burst into glory, and "faith is lost in sight !"

24th October, 1861

We have been taught in part to glory in nothing but "the Cross" (the very type of rejection) "of our Lord Jesus Christ," perhaps the only thing in which the flesh might *not* glory. Anything else it might parade, but how parade the very depth of scorn and ignominious reproach? and to whom? What we want is more company with Jesus in His own inner sanctuary; then indeed it would be our holy pride to stand by *His* name and *His* interests in a world in which there is not a single breath or pulse in sympathy with *Him*. "I am crucified to the world;" my position is that of Christ; the world scorns me and casts me out.

11th February, 1862.

A living sacrifice ! What a reasonable service for *us* ! What an easy yoke ! What a light burden ! Moses' might not seem an easy task—to count *reproach* RICHES greater than Egypt's treasures ! But how "the recompense of the reward" outshone the glitter of Egyptian (worldly) glory. Egypt, its learning, its honours, its treasures, is attractive

enough to you and to me (these are only the pleasures of sin, aye and for a season), but oh, is not the heavenly glory that has now (and already) shone in " God manifest in the flesh " the glory of being " sons of God " (not of Pharaoh's daughter), of being joint heirs with Christ (not to Egypt's throne, but to " the throne of all the earth ") in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge—oh, is not this enough to blind one's eyes to the rainbow colours of an Egyptian bubble ! And is it not enough to attach us heart and soul, energy and will, to the One in whom all this true and abiding glory shines ! We want to live more in the heart of these things that they may have more power over us. May it be so henceforth !

9th April, 1862.

The path of faith is as *simple* as it is happy. Attempt to please Christ and the world (or your own nature), and you are bewildered. A Christian normally is polite to every one, and considerate of every one—Christ, I am sure, would have been so. This, in *small* things as in great ones. I am sure the blessed Jesus would have been affable and gentle—there is wisdom needed too, as to conversation, etc., and He would have been wise as serpents, harmless as doves. But it was not only His to resist where there was evil, but when everything had a fair outside or was going on in the usual course, it was His *meat* to do the will of Him that sent Him. It would be very little to say that the will of the Father was the *passion* of Christ's life here. And *I* am here a heavenly stranger with a heavenly mission, as Christ was. The flesh likes to stand well with those

around, and it would be vastly easier and more agreeable to go on with worldly people in a "gentlemanly" way than to be among them as one passing through a great grave in the power of a risen life, with motives and concerns and interests and occupations and delights and purposes that find no response from earth or earthborn ones. Oh, it requires power, constant and fresh from above to do the latter. AND THE WORLD WON'T LIKE IT. God may touch hearts by it, and at least it will go up to Him a sweet savour of Christ, treasured in His heart beyond all conception. That Christian is an unhappy one who has not *broken with the world*.

18th July, 1862.

Above all, use time for eternity, and then every moment will turn to ages of blessing. They may seem chill and heavy in the passage—from the other side they will be bright with immortal glory.

17th July, 1867.

And remember the unchanging One whose thoughts are thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end. I grant there is nothing I can direct you to in this world which is "enough the mind and heart to fill;" but oh Jesus! the blessed Jesus! *He is*. Now don't raise any question about yourself at all. Think of *Him*. Think of Him *in detail*. His life down here—at the pool of Bethesda—the well of Sychar—the gate of Nain—the sepulchre at Bethany—the house of Simon. Think of Him as laid out divinely before you in all these lines, and

then follow Him to Gethsemane and Calvary. Oh the blessed Jesus! He stepped into a world of sin and sorrow, and said "Come unto ME ALL ye that labour and are heavy laden," etc. In His life He carried many a grief and bare many a sorrow. He never relieved misery which He did not in a sense take to Himself. And then—oh then—His *death*, and for those that caused it! The Lord give you grace to take all to Him.

29th July, 1872.

The first thing in a child is the liberty and joy of the relationship. What is *becoming* springs out of it, but it is entirely a secondary consideration—most important, and in a child of God infinitely important; but the best behaved child would give immeasurable pain if the liberty and joy of the relationship were not seen. Now what *our* Father looks for is this first of all. It is entirely His work—a work of sweetest as of deepest grace to make us His children, but He looks first, if I may say it, for the *heart* of a child—the liberty and joy of a child. Anything which would hinder these (I don't speak of *outward* things at all), we should judge as sins—the breath of a question as to the relationship should be treated as one would treat the avowed breath of that old serpent, the devil. It is not merely to rob us of our blessing—it is to rob Christ of His joy and glory. Think of how for such as we, surrounded with infirmity and failure, He has said, "These things have I spoken that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves." Perish the unbelief that counterworks Christ!

18th March, 1873.

How good to be in Hands which through grace we know as those pierced for us, Eternal God though He be! Marvellous it seems as I write the words that He who "clothes the heavens with blackness and makes sackcloth their covering" should have "given His back to the smiters and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair!" But be He God or man,* all that He is is the "strength of our hearts and our Portion for ever." May we *know* it in the peace of His presence!

16th July, 1873.

Above all let your mind be tranquil, casting *all* your care upon Him, for He careth for you (not *will* care *if* you cast). Let your confidence be ever founded upon that which *He* is, not upon that which you are before Him. It honours Him to trust Him. Oh, how we resemble Jacob! Read end of Gen. xxviii. The Lord speaks in grace that is possible alone for Him, and worthy of Him, to one whose duplicity and selfishness had rendered him a homeless wanderer. He speaks without a word of rebuke, and gives fully and largely the blessing of Abraham and Isaac, which he had vainly sought by deceit. He adds to all (and that as to a path which Jacob's sin was the occasion of), "And behold, I am with thee and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest and will bring thee again into this land, for *I will not leave thee* until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." Shall we say "Jacob's God is ours?" No, "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" is ours! What has He spoken

* i.e., "But be it as God or as man"—RD.

to us of? What has He given us out of His own fulness, and *according to it*? May we then learn in the light of this grace not to repeat the humiliating vow (or the spirit of) "IF God will . . . and of all that Thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth to Thee!" What a contradiction is unbelief—afraid to take God at His word, yet bold enough to offer Jehovah the rare chance of getting back one-tenth of all He should give!

Your unbelief and mine won't be written in the Bible, but it is just as ridiculous as Jacob's—just as unworthy and more so, because, there was not a word of Father in all that marvellous communication, "And because ye *are* sons . . . Abba Father."

29th July, 1873.

The Lord be with you and bless you, drawing your heart into a deeper sense of how *real* a thing it is, that God's joys are *ours*, and will be throughout His eternity! All else passes without satisfying in its passage, this satisfies without passing away.

When God breathed into man's nostrils it made it impossible for less than *Himself* to satisfy the craving of man's soul, however low man might fall. Hell will be the hideous unrest and despair of a soul created for the highest ends, which has sought its weal away from God and in spite of God. Heaven will be the perfect enjoyment of God, lost through sin, made known in redemption more excellently than ever.

"Already our joy is begun,
Our rest is the glory divine."

18th December, 1873.

Last night we had the 3rd Daniel . . . The one to whom God committed power (even when he had had the most striking evidence of whence his power came, by a servant of God recalling his dream, and explaining it in a manner the moral weight of which he had owned) turns this very power against God and would force His people into idolatry. There was no *doubt* as to the path of the faithful, but it needed real grace and faith, *i.e.*, the power of God, as their lives were forfeited to a certainty by obedience to God. Their side is taken and the apostate king (for in a sense he had *had* the knowledge of God), casts a defiant challenge in the face of the living God—" *Who is that God who shall deliver you out of MY hand?* " Modestly, but with a grandeur of firmness, they express, 1st, the *certainty* of their souls as to the *power* of the God that they served and that he had defied; 2nd, their confidence in His intervention; 3rd, their holy, faithful unswerving determination not to serve this idol whether God should directly interfere or not. What a lofty position faith set these three men in! They defy the whole power of this magnificent empire—the unbounded rage of the irresponsible warrior-king who wielded its force. This, too, with a gentleness that makes their inflexibility all the more telling. How faith sets a soul with God! What is the result? All the rage of the king, all the ready services of his satellites can do, as far as the three servants of God are concerned (not alas, as regards those who threw them into the furnace), is to destroy all that *hindered their walk with God*, and provide them a place where they can walk with the

Son of God in blessed liberty, in holy triumph, and in sweetest communion. The enraged monarch, cooled somewhat by the sight, is the very one who has to attest on the one hand his own impotence and utter defeat, and on the other the highest honour permitted to any creature, human or angelic, for those whom he has failed to alarm or to punish. How one's heart beats after such a walk in the trials of the way! Oh, its grandeur and its sweetness! May it be ours!

30th August, 1874.

In the afternoon we had the old barn* so full, that there was not a seat, and the seats extended far out into the open air; even then, some stood outside. I took up again the early part of John xiv. *L'amour présent du Seigneur Jésus en nous préparant une place par sa présence en haut. Sa venue pour nous prendre—notre entrée à la maison de Son Père, où nous trouverons la demeure bénie tout près de Lui, "afin que là où je suis, vous y soyez aussi"—puis, la pleine révélation du Père dans la Personne du Fils, et la connaissance que Celui-ci nous a donné de l' "où" Il allait, par Lui-même le chemin, etc.***

** "The present love of the Lord Jesus in preparing a place for us by His presence on high; His coming to take us; our entrance into the house of His Father, where we shall find the blessed abode close to Him, "that where I am there ye may be also;" then, the full revelation of the Father in the Person of the

* At Chables, Pays d'en Haut, Switzerland—ED.

Son, and the knowledge that the Son has given us of the "whither" He was going, by Himself the Way, etc."

Letters to his Children

3rd September, 1870.

Do you see the picture at the top of this letter? Perhaps you think it is rather a dark looking one. But you know these mountains must be dark looking. We have seen many high mountains and dark glens, but I have selected the above picture because by and by when you read English and Scottish history you will learn a very sad story about Glencoe, and I will now give you an outline of it. A Highland clan lived there in the reign of William III. that was not very favourable to this king, and thought another prince (James Stuart) ought to be king. Many Highland chieftains thought the same, but all had been at the time I speak of induced to own William III. Macdonald, the chief of the clan which inhabited this valley was late in giving in his submission, and soldiers were sent who murdered the old man and his family and many of the clan, and burned the cottages. We saw the ruins at Glencoe three years ago. So you see if the mountains look dark, the history is still darker.

From HOTEL BEAU RIVAGE, OUCHY.

13th August, 1871.

I preached Christ to-night from John iv. It was my first Gospel preaching in French.

From HAMPSTEAD.

(TO HIS SON AT BARNSLEY).

7th September, 1877.

For a little distance on each side of Masbro' Station, but especially on the Barnsley side you would pass through the scene of a good many events of my childhood which are very vividly impressed upon my memory. Now as I write, my eye runs over the places, and traces them almost as accurately as if I lived over again the part of my life spent among them.

I have no doubt you will find a good many walks to interest you. As you wander about the lanes of Rockley and Worsborough you will find them additionally interesting as you think that my feet trod them merrily many a time before I was your age. At Rockley, in an old farm house now pulled down, we used to have a weekly prayer meeting, and many a time have I run down the woods in the evening in time to take tea at the farm before the prayer meeting. The distance between the little house at Worsborough and the old farm did not take me long, I can assure you. Time has passed rapidly since these days, and I can but worship and praise as I think of all the Lord's goodness to me.

GRINDELWALD, *18th August, 1888.*

Glad you have read more of Hannington. Happy they who are at work (anywhere He appoints) for Christ. Thrice happy who are called from the Work to rest with Him. Neither is my portion. Oh, to find it more fully in His blessed Person !

HAMPSTEAD, 14th September, 1892.

It is a trial that the bank has had to stop payment, but I am kept in great peace. Of course, I don't know what the result will be. I may get the amount of my current account after a long delay ; the shares will be lost, I expect. Altogether it's a great loss for this world and a great gain for eternity. God be praised.

WORCESTER, 27th October, 1892.

(ON THE FIRST BIRTHDAY OF HIS ELDEST GRANDCHILD).

My beloved children, Although I very much want to felicitate my little E— on her first birthday, I don't know how to manage it. Can you help me? I pray very earnestly the richest blessing of the Father of the Lord Jesus upon her, and upon you in regard to her. Surely He says, "Take this child and nurse (her) *for Me* and I will give thee thy wages." May He give you wisdom and grace for a task so difficult and so blessed ; and in the day of the Lord Jesus I will congratulate you still more heartily, and then face to face. More kisses and love for the precious one who is so little conscious of either the love with which my heart beats, or of the prayers (at) the first milestone of a life now to go on as long as God sits on His throne.

And what can I say to you in the one minute in which I can write? I will *pray* and believe that "My God (may and) shall supply ALL your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Your (all three) tenderly loving

FATHER.

A very bright day to you, if another day of mortal life dawn upon us !

13th April, 1893.

E—is a bunch of delight which you *must not* spoil. It is easy to *do*—impossible to *undo*. Don't love yourselves—love her.

Letters of Birthday Greetings
(EXTRACT FROM A LETTER TO J—).

2nd December, 1889.

The mercy-seat should be a very real place of meeting for those who *know* Him that sits upon it, who know the value of that blood which makes the sinner of deepest dye fair and spotless in that ineffable light.

At all events it is the place of all others in which I find rest, in thinking of my far-away child and all her possible need. One thing is certain, that we have a Father's ear, a Father who knows perfectly the least need and the greatest—who loves with the strength of a Father—the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, and with the tenderness and far reaching sympathy of a mother

Peter when he said, "I go a fishing," after the Lord's resurrection, evidently did not take the Lord much into his calculations, but the Lord had something to say to him. His plans were deep laid ones, and Peter's purpose to go a fishing was made to serve those plans. He had in His mind the wondrous draught of fishes and the unbroken net and the tenderly prepared breakfast after a toilsome night, the testimony of His unfailing, active love. Oh, how Peter's heart must have glowed as in quietness he thought afterwards of those pierced hands preparing for His poor but beloved Peter a fire and food.

Even though his heart must be "grieved," the love that looked on him in the midst of his faithlessness, is still towards him, in the tender care and gracious provisions of that cold spring morning. "Lovest thou Me?" would find an answer for days and years to come, "We love Him because He first loved us."

I hope, my dear child, the word of Christ will dwell in you richly. Read it much. It will pay well for the time you occupy in reading it. Pray that the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, may take the things of Christ unfolded in it and "shew" them to your understanding and heart. Cultivate intercourse with the blessed Lord. Never receive a joy or sorrow that you do not communicate with (Him).

He can make His presence and His sympathy a far more real thing than that of any earthly friend. Do not rest without it. I am looking for great blessing for you from these few months. I am counting upon God, that it will not only be used for your blessing as regards your studies and your experience in matters which concern this life, but that it will be blessed to your soul in a distinct deepening of His grace, and in His drawing your heart into closer practical communion with Himself. Oh that you may taste His love in secret! Oh that it may win your heart more and more to His blessed Person! Oh that you may learn more and more to turn to Him every hour for comfort, for guidance, for "a word in season to him that is weary," for all *you* need, and for all that *He* would pour through you for the need of others! We are never so much blessed as when we are made a blessing.

I do commend you to the tender love of our God

and Father, through Jesus Christ. May the year you are now entering upon be much the happiest of your life ! And may each succeeding year wherever it is spent, be happier and holier than the one that went before ! Oh that people may take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus ! This is the best wish my heart can form for you, my child. God grant it !

LONDON, 30th October, 1903.

(TO HIS DAUGHTER IN CHINA).

It won't do for me to say that you are twice as dear as when I last wrote a birthday letter to you, because I don't know how you could be. But now while retaining all your own unity you are two, and I feel you doubly dear and doubly to be cared for. The Lord bless you, my dearest—on this returning anniversary and make it a better one than any of the past ones ! I feel it increasingly important to put ourselves and all our affairs into the Lord's good hand and leave them there. There is nothing like it for our peace, for our holiness, for our deep joy in His love, and above all there is nothing like it for the glory of God. Be it yours, my child, ah, a thousand times more that it has been mine !

I was grieved to hear of dear ——'s fever, but I hope it is a thing of the past, with no remains but lessons of grace. . . . I hope in God's great goodness you may be given to each other to be co-partakers of the grace of life. Oh that I could run over and see you married, but this cannot be; I must send my wishes *via* the Mercy Seat. They will suffer no loss in the Hands that present them to the One who sits there.

9th February, 1909.

My beloved —,

To-morrow is a day of unusual interest to me—to us. We recall the mercies, and they are great ones, of the last thirty years. We remember them with unfeigned thankfulness to our God and Father. There have been trials; it could not be otherwise. But trials that come from the hand of Him who spared not His only Son are blessings. We would not be without them. The passage commonly relegated to tombstones, faith takes up with joy, "Thy will be done." We give thanks for *direct* mercies as mercies, but knowing that a Father's love is in them, we thank God for difficulties and sorrows.

It seems strange that our youngest son will be thirty years old to-morrow. I congratulate you on the Lord's great goodness during those years, I congratulate you and myself that they are past, and bring us thirty years nearer to our "Hope"—"Christ Jesus, our Hope" 1 Tim. i. 1. R.V. It has often been said (it can scarcely be said too often), "For the Christian, the best is always ahead." We do well to bear this in mind, for we are *pilgrims* here. Our Home—our Fatherland—is in heaven. But faith thinks of heaven as the place that the Lord Jesus fills—the Lord in whom the Father is revealed and made ours "by the Spirit all pervading." A very happy instance of this faith is in Phil. iii., where one is looked at as running a race, neither looking behind nor to either side, but straight on to a mark (Christ in glory) to which a prize is attached, "Christ in glory." "ONE thing I do." You have been now a good many years running this race, and

I commend you earnestly to our gracious God for the rest. It is simple and easy in proportion as the eye is upon Christ. If we are careful and troubled about many things it is neither simple nor easy. If "for me to live is Christ" it is as simple as it is blessed. Alas, how we fail in this simplicity! May God work in us from now till the Lord comes, that it may be truly "not I, but Christ!"

Letter on the Occasion of a Son's Marriage.

ST. LEONARDS,
10th December, 1904.

My dear Friends,

Most of you know that I have been here and in bed for more than a fortnight. Although forbidden to be with you, I have been allowed to sit up for an hour this evening. May I count on your loving forbearance and have a finger in the pie? I feel well enough to join you, indeed well enough and young enough to be the bridegroom's "best man." I will for a moment think myself sharing your joy as one of you, with a hearty "God bless you" to bride and bridegroom. I will not say "they deserve to be happy," though that might be true in a natural sense. But I have learned one lesson at least in my nearly 70 years' pilgrimage, that it is better to receive all the boundless goodness of our God as pure grace—*His* grace, through Him Who alone is worthy.

How I should have liked to join many loving hearts

in thanking God for His unspeakable grace both to bride and bridegroom in bringing them to a knowledge of Himself in the face of Jesus Christ ! Thank God that they can say as I have often said—

“ Let one in his innocence glory,
 Another in works he has done :
 Thy blood is my claim and my title ;
 Beside it, O Lord, I have none.”

Many hearts will go up from your company, and my heart joins them in seeking for those beloved ones that blessing which maketh rich, and with which He adds no sorrow. May their lives, now united, be crowned with the richest blessing of the “ God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ! ”

We do humbly and earnestly commend them to Him. Happy for us that He knows all the future, and “ He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all ” will with Him freely give them all things !

There is another marriage in the near future—the marriage of the Lamb ; no sickness will keep one away on that bright morning. Thank God for as many of us as know the Lamb now, and are cleansed in His blood ready for the day of His glory ! May we ALL meet there and join in “ *Thou art worthy !* ”

Thank you for your love and presence, and for letting me join you in this way.

A little tired, but

Very affectionately yours,

T. NEATBY.

To a Young Friend.

HOYLAKE, 15th November, 1895.

I am strongly convinced that we all need much more of what I should call objective Christianity, *i.e.*, the presentation of the truths of Christianity, and above all of the person of Christ, in their objective character. The subjective is, no doubt, extremely important, *but it depends upon the objective.*

As an illustration take Phil. ii. and iii. In the former the Apostle (the Holy Ghost) would correct selfishness and party spirit in the saints. He does so by directing their minds to the two-fold self-humiliation of Christ, and he goes on to exhort them to a loyal taking of the place which God gives us, namely, Christ's place down here. Sons of God, lights in the world, and holders forth of the Word of Life. In the 3rd chapter it is Christ glorified, the same blessed One, the attraction and object of the soul. The apostle would win Him there, and would have them like-minded. *Our object forms us.*

Christ is the prize of the calling on high. The one who is going on to win Him becomes like Him all the way along. You will find this characterises the practical teaching all through the New Testament.

"We all . . . beholding the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image," etc. God has glorified the blessed Servant and sin-bearer, putting the stamp of "glory" upon all that Christ did, said or thought as recorded in the four Gospels. It is there, above all, that we see "the glory of the Lord," and it is there that we are "changed into the

same image." This is the secret of practical holiness. There is no other way of attaining to it. It is not mysticism. It is no slavish imitation. If Christ *liveth in me*, Christ will look through my eyes, Christ will speak through my lips, He will work through my hands, He will walk through my feet.

To a Young Friend on Her Baptism.

September, 1892.

When we are dead, it is only natural that some one should bury us. But in spiritual things our consent is necessary. The Apostle says "I am crucified with Christ." That is the solemn fact upon which baptism is founded—*death with Christ*. There was moral death before, but alas, we knew nothing of it until the Spirit of God taught us! But when we were taught of God to refuge ourselves in the Cross of Christ, He forgave our sins through the precious blood of the Cross.

Our "old man" He condemned and put to death in and by that Cross. The "old man" is called "sin" in Scripture. It is an evil tree—an evil fountain—ever ready to bear bitter fruit and send forth polluted water.

God be praised that our "old man" is crucified with Him "that the body of sin might be destroyed that we should not henceforth serve sin."

Thank God that we can never come into judgment, for our *sins* are pardoned and forgotten (Heb. x). and *sin in the flesh* is by the judgment of God put to death. May we reckon ourselves "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

You confessed it by your baptism—" That I may bury my dead out of my sight."

May God give you every day to hold yourself for " dead but alive unto God " bearing fruit unto Him !

To a Friend in Bereavement.

January, 1904.

It is a real rest to the spirit to turn from earth to heaven, from the main street of — to the presence of Christ above. One moment in the body, absent from the Lord, the very next with Christ, which indeed is far better than anything the beloved one had known before. He there has the "abundance of revelations," but he will never need the thorn in the flesh to buffet him, for he will go out no more. It is not in the holy place that there is danger of being puffed up, not when one sees the Christ in His glory, but when the vision fails.

May the Saviour's own joy in welcoming the redeemed spirit to His presence above be a true balm for all your hearts ! Doubtless John xvii. 24 contemplates a resurrection scene, but it necessarily applies to each individual spirit gathered home. What a tale of grace do those words tell : " they also whom Thou hast given me ! " Compare John vi. 45.

To a Friend who had been in Ill-Health.

CLARENS, *11th January, 1906.*

I was very glad to receive your last letter because of the improved tidings of your health. Our

blessings are not temporal ones in earthly places, and yet we can count upon our Father for everything and we prove His tender goodness in less matters than our health. "Jehovah that healeth thee" must be taken spiritually, for us. And yet it is a blessed fact, at least for me, in regard to the body. He who cares for the sparrow that falls loves to have the confidence of His children in their weakness and sickness. Many a direct answer to prayer have I had from "Jehovah that healeth me." But He has often plans of wisdom and goodness which are only to be accomplished by letting patience have her perfect work. We see this very distinctly in the end of 2 Cor. iv. No doubt the experiences of the great Apostle were extreme, but if the outward man perisheth, the inward man is renewed day by day. "The light affliction" works "the weight of glory," and the "moment" of it the "eternal." Oh for more simple faith in God! Oh for a single eye that sees Christ only, in health or affliction.

I pray the Lord to bless the means recommended for your improved health until the Lord come. The upward journey will not fatigue you at all! "The wings of the morning" will bear you up with ease and great joy to meet the One who loved you and gave Himself for you!

To J. R. C.

CANNES, 23rd February, 1906.

I don't know how it strikes you, but I never felt more than of late the rest of spirit that "my times

are in Thy hand " gives. Health comes and goes, but *His* will is supreme and it is always Love. Oh to have the sense of it ever fresh in the heart ! *I*, at least, find myself prone to regret happy days of service long gone by—but Christ is ahead, and He is better than service, even when service is the alabaster box. The chief part of your service and mine may lie behind, but the " well done " is in front, and the undisguised joy of His heart as He pronounces the words. Ah ! *that* we shall surely see ! (The only one that missed the " well done " was the one who did not *know* his Master). . . . Be very careful till the brighter days come. There is always a bright " look out ; " it is upwards—2 Thess. iii. 16.

The Anniversary of My Mother's Departure to be with Christ.

"In His favour is life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."—Psa. xxx. 5.

What strange emotions rise,
And struggle in my breast !
A chord unstrung ! A *mother* gone !
But oh, to endless rest !

How fresh the wound ! though now
A year has passed away :
But oh, how many hearts have bled
Since that heart-rending day !

I wept, and well I might !
I found the waters deep ;
My sinking heart wellnigh o'erwhelmed,
'Twas but *relief* to weep.

I wept, but not as those
With *hopeless* sorrow pressed,
To whom " far better " is unknown—
And unknown heavenly rest.

In lonely hour of grief,
With sorrow such as mine,
Where could my fainting heart find rest
Without a hope Divine ?

A resurrection-hope
My spirit to upbear,
A Christ above, seen through my tears,
My keenest pang to share.

I ought to *praise*—I *do* !
One whom I fondly love,
Beyond the reach of grief or pain,
Is blessed *with Christ* above.

Her face, her own sweet smile,
No more below I see ;
But, though I weep, full well I know
They wait to welcome me.

A year !—and what a year
Of patient grace and love !
What openings of the Father's heart,
What mercies from above !

In waters deep I've learnt
Depths in His gracious heart ;
And, of His mercies, I would least
With these sweet lessons part.

What have I learnt of Christ,
His tender sympathies,
The meltings of His yearning heart,
His gentle ministries !

If then in deepest grief,
When sorrows most abound,
Such depths of love and tenderness
In Thee, my Lord, are found ;

Do Thou with me whate'er
It seemeth good to Thee ;
That I *Thyself* may better know,
Thy power may rest on me.

EDINBURGH, 28th February, 1859.

SELECTIONS FROM HIS WRITINGS.

Nothing Counts but Christ.

A few days ago, the grave closed over the mortal remains of one who, "in labours more abundant," had been permitted to serve Christ for half a century.* More than one of his children in the Gospel took part in the last service of love and fellowship in sorrow around his grave; and many more surrounded it with tears of mingled joy and sorrow.

The servant proves already the reality and the sweetness of his Lord's words, "And where I am, there shall also My servant be." After long years of active service, richly owned of Him who had "wrought all His works in him," the servant was called to be a sufferer. The labours had been most abundant, the sufferings were scarcely less so. It was then that the good ointment of most precious grace sent forth its richest fragrance. Matured and mellowed for the heavenly ingathering were "the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God;" deepened and widened the knowledge of "Him that is from the beginning," which characterises the fathers (1 John ii. 13).

* Andrew Miller fell asleep May 8th, 1883. Devout men carried him to his burial at Abney Park, May 12th.

After the burden and heat of the day, in the eventide of retirement, this beloved servant of Christ could look back, could look around, could look forward, and judge of everything *in relation to Christ*. Even his sufferings became a link of his soul with Him. "NOTHING COUNTS BUT CHRIST," he said, with an emphasis which could not but burn the words into the hearts of those who heard them.

"Nothing counts but Christ." All else is without value. All else will perish. The knowledge of God revealed in His person, and communion with Him by the Holy Ghost, satisfy the soul here, and they never pass away. True service to His name, humble and obedient following of Him, devotion of heart to His interests here below, will "count" in courts above. "If any man serve Me, him will My Father honour."

How feebly have we learned the thoughts of our God as to Christ, His blessed Son! For Him, Christ is exclusively the centre, the purpose, the object and end of all. The *ways* of God are all for His glory: the *purpose* of God is, "that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father;" and the *heart* of God:—"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

For God, "Christ is all." Faith receives of His fulness and enters into His thoughts. Christ is for faith what He is for God, whatever the measure in which it is given to us down here to enter into it. The more simple faith is, the more the soul is with God. Kept by His Spirit simple and humble in His presence, it thinks and feels and judges according to God. Christ becomes its *one* object. Faith ever judges of things as they affect the honour and the

interests of Christ. It lifts the soul above the influences and motives which would naturally govern us, and gives a new and divine test by which to try everything. An ambitious man is governed by his love of power, an avaricious man by his love of money, a Christian by Christ. To rule is the passion of the first ; to amass wealth, the second eats his bread with carefulness ; and the third—" for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord," " that I may win Christ," " according to my earnest expectation and my hope . . . that with all boldness, as always, so now also, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death ; for to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain," —such is the subject, such the life of the Christian.

" Nothing counts but Christ." What does power over his fellows avail a dying man ? It would be less than vanity to one going to be with Christ, and a nether millstone round the neck of one sinking to the " place of torment." What is money to a miser, as he crosses the threshold of eternity ? What means will he devise to take it with him ? And if he could keep his grip of it, what value would it have for the soul that dwells with everlasting burnings ?

But *Christ* in that solemn hour—so far from our having to part from Him, it is then that the soul knows how precious He is ; it is then that His presence is fully enjoyed. When the eye is bright and clear for things down here, how the soul " sees through a glass darkly ! " But now the lid drops, the eye is fixed, it sees no more ! It is the very moment when the " glass darkly " is gone, the " heavenly vision " is in all its brightness, the ransomed spirit is with Christ. In the hour of death,

wealth does not count, nor power in this world, nor a fair name in it.—“ Nothing counts but Christ.”

Paul had been a prisoner some four years. Personal liberty is sweet,—sweeter for him because of his labours for Christ. To the one who, even in prison, could exclaim, “ Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,” it must have been a keen trial to be withdrawn from the field of free labour. He loved the work, he had wrought at it as one who loved it—a model for us ! But year after year he hears about it in prison, he thinks about it, he dwells upon it in memory, in interest, in longing. The walls which confine him, the chain which binds him to the soldier that keeps him, forbid the activities in which he has grown grey, but for which his heart is still fresh.

And now, the imprisonment is likely enough to end in his death. He is about to appear before Nero. He writes to his beloved Philippians, and we see down into his heart, as he opens it to them. One word sums up its breathings and longings, its hopes and expectations—CHRIST. He hears of some who, taking advantage for their own exaltation of his absence from the work, are preaching Christ of envy and strife, supposing to add affliction to his bonds. At once, his soul refers it all to Christ. He measures it, not by Paul’s reputation, but by the interests of Christ. It is Christ they are preaching. Had they been false teachers of the law, he would have wished them “ cut off.” But it is *Christ* they preach. The savour of His name reaches souls, hitherto dry and cold, having no hope, and without God in the world.

Not a word of reproach, not even of righteous indignation ; his bonds have turned to the furtherance of the Gospel he loves. Christ, the covering of his eyes, " Christ Jesus, *my Lord*," is preached. He rejoices, yea, and will rejoice.

Thrice happy prisoner, what liberty is thine ! Thine, in the third heaven for a moment, to taste the joy of the Lord ; and thine in the prison to prove His presence, and in its rest and liberty to forget thyself ! Hallowed courts above where Christ fills the free and happy gaze ! Hallowed prison-house and hallowed heart (spite of flesh within and conflict all around)—

" Where only Christ is heard to speak,
Where Jesus reigns alone ! "

As to his fate, how shall he decide ? for it does not depend upon Cæsar. " What I shall choose I wot not." Blessed choice, though difficult to make, when either way it is Christ ! For if it be death, Christ will be magnified in his body, and he will " depart and be with Christ, which is far better." If he still live in the flesh, he will have the fruit of his labour, and Christ will be magnified in his body ; *to live is CHRIST.*

For Paul, with the need of the saints on the one side, and the joy of being with Christ on the other, " nothing counts but Christ." His work for Christ is not finished. Christ in the persons of the saints has still need of him down here. His choice is made. The decision is come to, not in the court, but in the prison. Read Phil. i. 24-26, and see how Christ *counts* in the heart of the Apostle. The happiest

man in Rome was not the Emperor, but his (apparently) helpless prisoner. The purple cannot make the former happy, nor can the prison make the latter unhappy. Cæsar has not Christ—he has nothing! Paul has Christ—he has everything! “Nothing counts but Christ.”

Later, the same blessed servant of Christ is again in prison. Circumstances are greatly changed, but not Christ! Paul the aged has lived long enough to find himself all but *alone*. The energy of his faith, the steadfastness of his purpose, the devotedness of his heart, the faithfulness of his love, had carried him too far for the lukewarmness of those who, under God, owed everything to him. “At my first answer no man stood with me, but all forsook me.” But it was *Christ* for him to live. Not a regret that two years before his happy spirit had not escaped to be with Christ, and this isolation been avoided. Christ *had* been magnified in his body by life. In nothing is he ashamed, for Christ stands by him now. Sweeter that company, more blessed that communion, because of the moral desert in which he tasted it. His “earnest expectation and hope” were gained: by him the preaching was fully known.

And now the “heavenly kingdom” of that same Lord stands bright before his unwearied eye. His days are numbered. He has no choice to make. His service is complete, save the service of death; and he is “ready to be offered up.” Bright, and not far off, he sees “a crown of righteousness” in the hand of the One who stood by him when all forsook him. How well, through grace, he knew Him! It was He whose love he tasted, when, with bound feet and bleeding back, he sang praises at midnight in the

inner prison at Philippi. It was He whose power and smile raised him up after the stoning at Lystra. It was He whose presence cheered the long, lone day and night he passed in the deep. Happy servant, sweet has been thy toil and blessed thy sufferings with Christ so near to thee! But toil is past and suffering over. "The mark for the prize" is reached; CHRIST in heavenly glory is "WON."

The day of reward, with its "crown of righteousness," hastens on, but already the rest of his presence and the joy of being with Him are the portion of the one who learned so well, in the desert our feet still tread, the power of His name, and the sweetness of His company.

In heavenly courts, the noble descent of Paul, his high attainments, his lofty position among men, and his righteousness in the flesh, count for nothing. But all the knowledge of Christ he gained in paths of keenest trial and lonely sorrow, all the communion of His love that he there proved, all his service for Christ—these count with God as costly jewels to shine in undimmed splendour throughout an eternal day. They count *according to God's estimate of the worth of Christ*. "If any man serve Me, him will My Father honour." Priceless honour in that everlasting home of love! There, "NOTHING COUNTS BUT CHRIST!"

“I Shall be Satisfied.”*

His journey was short, but it was a bright and happy one, both as a child and as a Christian. About the middle of his fourteenth year it ended in a brightness before which the brightest sun that lighted his earthly days was pale indeed.

That his life had been as nearly blameless as the life of a child could be had nothing to do with the deep peace, the unclouded assurance in which he closed his eyes for their last sleep. He had learned, as only One can teach, that he was a sinner before God. His simple, happy testimony, in childlike confidence was:—“The precious blood of Christ washed all my sins away.” Precious blood, indeed! Oh *how* precious! “Precious” for the weeping mother as she sees her child escaping her loving grasp and passing into an unseen eternity!†

“Precious” for the lonely weeper, as the autumn winds howl about the lately closed grave, and the rains of winter fall upon it! Unspeakably precious! The loved one is not there, but only the outer covering, the torn-down tabernacle; Jesus has received the set-free spirit in the title of “His own blood.” “To-day shalt thou be *with Me* in Paradise.” But supremely “precious” is that blood to the soul itself that is quitting its house of clay to appear before God. A mother’s hand may hold the head softly till the spirit passes away. Her tenderness can go no farther. The last grasp of the hand is

* Written on the occasion of the death of his fifth son.—R.D.

† UNSEEN, but no longer UNKNOWN, since Christ entered “with His own blood,” and the believer can say, “we see Jesus.”

relaxed, the last kiss is pressed on the cold brow. A mother's love can do no more. *It cannot cross the line.*

“ Precious ” *then* the blood which has purged the conscience from dead works—which has blotted out as a cloud his transgressions, and as a thick cloud his sins! “ Precious ” the blood which has met every claim of God, and has established His throne in righteousness as a mercy-seat! “ Precious ” the blood which has more glorified God than sin had dishonoured Him, and has made His satisfied heart of love to rejoice over His redeemed with joy, to rest in His love, to rejoice over them with singing! “ Precious ” the blood which now brings the ransomed spirit into the circle of such joys! No lonely passage into a “ world unknown! ” Rather an abundant entrance there, where that “ precious blood ” is known in its true value; a “ boldness to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus ” that heaven honours!

If heaven was filled with joy once, when the newly-saved soul was led to repentance, and God's own joy was diffused through the courts above, what thrills of praise now that the happy soul enters, confident and glad in the one only title, “ the precious blood of Christ! ” Joy in the heart of a redeeming God! Joy for the Father whose “ commandment is life everlasting,” and for the Son, who in obedience to that commandment laid down His life! Joy for Him who gave that now redeemed and happy spirit to the Son of His love, in eternal counsels of wisdom and grace! Joy too—unspeakable joy—for the Saviour to receive in realms of endless rest the fruit of the travail of His soul! The darkness and toil of Calvary have won for the

ransomed of the Lord the brightæss and rest of the Paradise of God. He who stood to receive the spirit of Stephen finds fresh joy in welcoming to that Paradise those whom the Father gave Him. Thrice precious blood of Christ !

It was only on the morning that the last breath was drawn that the dear child knew that there was danger to his natural life. It surely must have been the Lord Himself who whispered the Home-call. Not a sign of fear ! Not a sign of regret that a life, more joyous than most, had reached its end. “ I am going to the Lord,” he suddenly exclaimed, as he heard or felt the summons ; and soon after—

“ Joyful, joyful will the meeting be ! ”

Oh, what has God wrought in His redeeming love ! He has filled the terrible “ worlds unknown ” with the smile of Jesus—with the welcome of a known and beloved Saviour. “ I am going to the Lord, and I shall be happier than any of you. I shall be satisfied when I awake in His likeness ! ” Yes, the heart that knows Him thinks of heaven as the place where HE is. He who is the light and joy of that scene for those who have reached it, is the attraction for those who are nearing it.

The heart bows low before such grace. A death-bed with its untold terrors, turned by redeeming love into a peaceful home-going, and the “ king of terrors ” himself into a welcome messenger to bring the soul into the presence of Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood ! No fear in that meeting ! The once marred face has no strangeness for the spirit that now gazes upon it.

Taught of God, it *knows* Him to whom it owes everything for eternity, and in whose presence it has now found fulness of joy.

“ He who to His rest shall greet thee,
Greet thee with a well known love.”

How true the instincts of a child, taught of God, in connecting with the joy of seeing the Lord the further joy of the resurrection morning !

“ Directly I leave off looking at you, mother dear, I shall see Jesus.” What would the wise ones of earth give at such a moment for a like assurance, for such divine certainty ! Truly “ out of the mouths of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise.” “ They shall be all taught of God.” “ Wisdom is justified of all her children.” For “ wisdom ” it is which so receives the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ as to count it all joy to depart and “ see Jesus ; ” wisdom it is, divine wisdom, which *knows* that “ absent from the body ” he will be “ present with the Lord ; ” wisdom “ which none of the princes of this world knew : for had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. *But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit.*”

One of earth’s wisest has exclaimed : “ Child ! Child no more ! the coursers of time, lashed as it were by invisible spirits, hurry on the light car of our destiny. And all that we can do is, in calm self-possession, to hold the reins with a firm hand : and

to guide the wheels, now to the right, now to the left, a stone here, a precipice there ; whither it is hurrying us who can tell ? ” The highest attainment of man’s vaunted intellect is the doubting, dark, dismal : “ *who can tell ?* ” A child of tender years, but yet a child of heavenly wisdom, may well rebuke the great German master. Far removed from vain human speculation he knows WHOM he has *believed*. He is going to be with Him. A few moments and he will gaze on His peerless face. His communion is already with the Father, of whom he has heard and learned, and with His Son Jesus Christ, whom, says he, “ *I shall see.* ” The house of his earthly father may have been the happy scene of a thousand acts of tenderest love and care. He is now exchanging it for the heavenly home of a Father, known in grace as revealed in Christ the Son of His love. Peaceful change ! No doubt the supports of the earthly tent are roughly shaken as it is quickly taken down, but all is peace within. Quiet assurance too, that—

“ Eternal in the heavens
 Is his prepared abode ;
 Radiant and pure, in light divine,
 The building of our God ! ”

Into its joy the spirit calmly passes, whilst the “ fulness ” of joy awaits a brighter morning. Yet how “ far better ” who shall tell ? He closes his eyes beneath a devoted mother’s smiles, at once dimmed and brightened by scalding tears, but he *knows* he will open them in that better home beneath his Saviour’s satisfied smile. Priceless grace of God to lost and ruined sons of Adam !

Let us linger for a moment by the dying bed of a little child, whose single eye of faith sees Him that is invisible. No helpless journey in a drear unknown is thine! No tight rein on a dark and dangerous road which no assurance lights, no company cheers! Nay, nay! a path lighted by the favour of God and the love of the Father! A path in the company and under the conduct of the blessed Shepherd who folds His precious lamb to His tender and sheltering bosom! Happy child of faith! He who has given thee "rest by His sorrow and life by His death" has cast the light of His risen countenance on the dark valley of death that thy spirit might exclaim: "Thou wilt show me the path of life: in Thy presence is fulness of joy."

Yes, it was a true and right instinct, at least, that linked the joy of being with his Saviour, whilst "unclothed," with the deeper and perfect blessedness which awaits him and us, when that Saviour "shall change our bodies of humiliation that they may be fashioned like unto His body of glory." The fact that Scripture says little as to the disembodied state is very instructive. This is not the accomplishment of God's purpose, though a part of His ways, and, for those who enter the heavenly Paradise to be with Christ, a most blessed part. When the thief, who sought to be remembered in the far-distant coming of Christ in His Kingdom, heard that that very day he was to be with Christ in Paradise, his heart might well dance for joy. What *could* be better? A thief, an injurious person, one who had cast in Christ's teeth the shame and the sorrow of the cross which that blessed One was enduring for his deliverance—such a one, redeemed

by the blood shed at his side, purged from an evil conscience and washed with pure water, to be in Christ's own joy on high that day before the sun went down! What songs of thankful, adoring joy filled his ransomed soul! The horrible pains of such a death were wellnigh unnoticed in the joys he began to taste beforehand. His new-found Saviour, his blessed Lord, cries “Into Thy hands I commend My spirit,” and he knows that that spirit is now welcomed to the Paradise where he was to join Him. It cannot be long, for the sun (but lately darkened) is sinking in the west. The Sabbath, a high day, draws on. The ruthless soldiers, charged with the work of getting rid of those who were hanging on the trees, come round and break the legs of the thieves, heedlessly and heartlessly fulfilling the Lord's words as to one: “*To-day* shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.” Who shall say what that unbound spirit had proved “of joy and love no tongue can tell,” by the time the sun had sunk behind the western hills?

And who shall tell the joy of a later day, when the head of another who had been a blasphemer, a persecutor and injurious, falls by the sword of Rome! He had learned to know his Master well, through grace, and his path, unlike the thief's, had been a long one. He had known his Lord in active service for His name, and in wearing suffering. He had known Him, had Him near to him, when preaching in His name “the forgiveness of sins” in the synagogue, and when preaching “Jesus and the resurrection” before the Areopagus, and found it his joy to spread the savour of His name in the hearts of a Dionysius and a Damaris, and in “many of the

Jews and religious proselytes." And he had known Him in the dark inner prison at Philippi, and when cast for a night and a day in the vast deep. He had known Him and learned His ways as he healed the lame man at Lystra, and when he lay as dead after his stoning there. In serving and suffering, in sorrow and joy, when the work prospered and when false brethren crept in unawares, when "all they which dwell in Asia heard the Word," and when no man stood with him but all forsook him, he had learned something of the depths of the heart of Christ Jesus his Lord.

What wonder that Paul should count death a gain when it set his spirit free to depart and to be with Christ? What could he desire better? Every affection of the soul finds its answer in that presence. For the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord he had counted all things loss. The same object before his eyes when death was presented called forth the desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Yet when the moment was come and he was "ready to be offered," his heart, though full of the joy of being with Christ "directly" that the axe had done its work, passes over the time of blessed waiting *with* Christ, and hails the day of glory waited for.

Thus it must ever be. Who can read the early part of 2 Cor. v. without longing for the power of life in Christ which has wrought in our souls, to be manifested in the mighty working by which "mortality shall be swallowed up of life"? Those in the ineffable joy of the Lord's presence on high *wait* with Him for the day of His glory and triumph. We wait here, encumbered with these poor bodies,

seeing through a glass darkly, absent from the Lord. We rejoice in the joy of our brethren who have reached that blissful presence ; so little would we, if we could,—

“constrain
Their unbound spirits into bonds again.”

Yet for them and for ourselves we desire the *full* result of the work of Christ and of the power of risen life in Him. “Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.”

How brightly will the resurrection morning greet our longing eyes ! With what glad hallelujahs shall we welcome Him who brings it ! Every longing of hearts which here below have tasted His love will have found its answer the moment we cast the eye upon Him. Faith’s first and constant craving, “that I may win Christ,” is at length satisfied : He is won !

There, centre of that multitude which no man can number, is Christ in His peerless beauty. “Many brethren” are there, but the First-born stands supreme. All own Him ; all bow before Him ; all gather around Him. *They* are glorified, but the glory is unmistakably *His*. His pre-eminence, even in the glory which He shares with those who surround Him, fills all with joy. Their best portion in that unclouded glory is to behold it in *His* face. The glory which the Father gave Him He has already given them. It is a glory which tells the sweet tale of redeeming love. His joy is full now that this glory folds them in its bosom.

The unspeakable satisfaction which beams in the

face that was once marred in behalf of those nearest to Him, will fill every heart and be reflected from "every sinless brow." "*He* shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied." "*I* shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness."

With Him, as He comes, is many a dear one long missed from the home and from the assembly. "The dead in Christ will God bring with Him" is written to be the comfort of broken hearts which that meeting alone will fully heal. Links which are merely natural will have passed away when "mortality is swallowed up of life;" but not those formed by the grace of God. The aged winner of souls whose loving entreaties led his grandchild to the Saviour will have him for a crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus. The mother to whose tears and prayers the child owes, under God and by His grace, his salvation will find a closer link with him in eternity than the natural link down here. The son, now hoary with years, who travailed in birth for a beloved mother gathered to Christ fifty years ago, will find his "heaven two heavens" as he sees her, fair and lovely, in the image of Christ.

" Thus have *I* pray'd—while others slept,
 I've pray'd and pray'd again, and wept
 Through half the live-long night,
 For one whose bright and beauteous brow
 Waits for a crown of glory now—
 A blessed saint in light."

The writer owes to his mother, now and for long with the Lord, the first taste of the water of life. Later on, it was his by the grace of God to bring deeper

draughts of the same water to cheer and strengthen her faith, and to give her the hope of the Lord's return as a fresh joy in her heart. She will not be his mother when the Lord brings her with Him ; but the double link of grace so precious will abide as long as fruits from the tree of life are the refreshment of the redeemed.

What consolation this for the bereaved heart ! Here, alas, how much is there to mar the precious fruits of grace ! There all will be the final perfection which befits the deep and wise counsels of a redeeming God ; all will fully answer to the value of the blood which has made them good. How beautiful the faces we have known and loved here when God brings them with Him ! At the parting, sorrow *would* well up in the heart, and struggle with the deeper joy which faith gave the soul. At the meeting on the cloud, joy has won its abiding victory ; God's hand has wiped away the last tear. *Then* the shadow of death passed over the mortal face, *now* the life of Christ beams there for ever. It was sown in weakness, it is raised in power ; it was sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.

No sort of spiritual joy will be wanting in His presence ; it is *fulness* of joy. But for us the highest and deepest will be the answer to the prayer, the very thought of which fills our hearts with joy whilst “ absent from the Lord : ” — “ Father I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me, for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world.” John xvii. 24. How joyful, wrapped in that cloud, to be shewn “ the path of life ” by Him who loved us and gave Himself

for us! Joyful, too, to enter *with Him* the Father's house! But there at last, in the home of love to find that prayer fully answered—ah! that joy has never yet entered the heart of man.

If Christ even now cherishes us as those whom the Father gave to Him, what manifestations of love shall we prove when *we* answer to all the thoughts and purposes of God about us! And what response from our enlarged and satisfied hearts!

What rest, what deep satisfaction to behold His glory with an eye no longer dim, with a heart no longer cold! What blessedness to contemplate that *given* glory, and to find that every ray of it tells of redeeming love! What joy to behold such glory in the face of Him whom the Father loved before the foundation of the world! But who shall tell that glory? Who can even conceive the blessedness of those who behold it? It is *given* to Christ, thank God! Yet He who received it was the Father's eternal delight. Sovereign, everlasting "Wisdom" brought up with Him. "The only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father." "For Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world."

Before His Majesty we shall bow in deepest worship. His glory we shall behold with adoring hearts. It will be our perfect, our eternal joy. The delight of His heart in having with Him those whom the Father gave Him will give the glory we behold rays of unspeakable gentleness. The gladness of a day of espousals will fill the blessed home of love and pervade the redeemed—not their spirits only, for each one will be clothed upon with his "house which is from heaven." Each redeemed one, body as well as soul, will be a chosen vessel of the Father's

love, when we are “ children of God, being children of the resurrection.” The whole man will delight in the glory of Him who has made the Father known, and brought us, in the value of His precious blood, to His heavenly home.

My brethren, a cup of joy remains untasted on high whilst these words are being traced ; it is a cup reserved for the day of untold brightness which will soon break for our rejoicing eyes. Jesus our Saviour will not taste it till we are with Him. Then what draughts for Him and for us ! Shall we indeed see His face as He drinks it ? Will our hands be stretched out to receive it from His ? Shall we, who now mourn the coldness of our love for Him,—shall *we* drink after Him of the wine of joy in the Father’s kingdom ? The soul is almost confounded in the presence of such grace. “ How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me, O God ! how great is the sum of them ! ” “ I SHALL BEHOLD THY FACE IN RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

But to behold Him will be to be like Him. “ For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the First-born among many brethren.” Rom. viii. 29. Precious purpose of our God at length accomplished :—“ we shall be like Him ; for we shall see Him as He is ! ” “ As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” We have been known down here to be the children of the first and rebellious Adam by our own likeness to him. There we shall be known, by the image we bear, to belong to the last and obedient Adam. Truly it will be “ fulness of joy ” to bear that loved and lovely image. Fulness of joy to be in it *for ever* !

“ To find each hope of glory gained,
Fulfilled each precious word ;
And fully all to have attained
The image of our Lord.”

The child was taught of God when his faith looked to the full accomplishment of God's counsels through the blood of Christ, and in his joy at the thought of being with Christ—even though unclothed—exclaimed :

“ I SHALL BE SATISFIED WHEN I AWAKE WITH HIS
LIKENESS.”

Gathering in the Name of the Lord Jesus.

More than fifty years ago, whilst quite a young servant of Christ, I became much exercised about the condition of the church at that time. Then the Keswick motto, "All one in Christ," was almost unknown, both in principle and in practice. Clerical pretension had not received the rude shock that it suffered some years later at the time of the Irish revival. And worldliness, that constant snare of the children of God, held terrible sway. Sectarianism, clerisy and worldliness in the church formed for me a real burden.

About this time I became acquainted with some devoted Christians, who met together in an exceedingly simple and, as it seemed to me, scriptural way for worship and communion, breaking bread every "first day of the week," welcoming all whom they had reason to believe were really children of God, sound in faith and godly in walk. They were without a separate *class* of ministers, though thankful for any whom the Lord might fit for, and use in "the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." I had found what I sought. I was known as a disciple and, according to my measure, a preacher of the Gospel, and was at once welcomed as a brother in Christ.

I found I had much to learn. These happy people with little pretension were living upon truths of which I knew little or nothing. A full salvation in a risen Christ, with whom they were one by the Holy Ghost, who dwelt in them; the distinct and

special calling of the church as the body and bride of Christ ; the present daily hope of His coming again ; the sovereignly important place of Israel in the Word and ways of God ; these and many allied truths were their daily food and their daily joy. Of these joys I was glad to partake with them and to find my heart more closely knit to Christ Jesus my Lord. What I then learned from God I hold more firmly to-day. It would indeed be a cloudy and dark day that saw me without one truth that then gladdened my heart.

Years passed away, and amid much weakness and failure my convictions as to these truths were strengthened and my enjoyment of them was increased. But little by little I found that sectarianism had pursued me where I thought myself safe from it, and that it had in some degree taken possession of me. The devil is subtle, and we, alas ! are prone to be fleshly and to " walk as men ; " an easy prey then to the enemy of Christ, who makes us think we are serving Him in refusing or depreciating those that " follow not with us " (Luke ix. 49). John no doubt thought himself jealous for his Master, whereas his fleshly zeal had the " us " for its object. Even after the whole truth as to " Christ and the Church " had been revealed, there were those who made Christ the head of a rival school to those of Paul and Apollos. Subtle indeed were both cases. For John might have rightly said, " He ought to follow Christ with us His chosen apostles." And the school at Corinth might have said : " Surely it is right to be ' of Christ.' " But the Lord's answer to John, and the Holy Spirit's question, " Is Christ divided ? " shew that the flesh

(and therefore Satan, *see* Matt. xvi. 23) was at work in both cases. So it was when, in 1884, I wrote a paper in which I claimed for those with whom I met for worship that they were exclusively “gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus.” What Corinthian carnality! Some two years later I publicly confessed my grave error. But now that the canker has spread, and that terms which contain it have received in some quarters the sanction of habitual use, I feel that a more categorical retractation is called for, together with an earnest protest against the appropriation by a few of that which is the privilege of all the children of God.

Let me here give two examples of the use of this *denominational title*: (1) I have seen repeatedly of late years printed copies of an outline “letter of commendation” to be filled in as required. It runs thus: “The saints gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus at ——— commend,” etc., and is addressed to “the saints gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus at ———.” (2) A periodical, giving reports of the evangelisation of south-eastern counties, is said to be “on behalf of assemblies of Christians gathered unto the name of the Lord Jesus.”

There are, then, “Christians gathered unto the Name of the Lord Jesus” distinguished from Christians not so gathered. This is their *denominational title*. They are formed into “assemblies” bearing this distinctive denomination. They are no longer “gatherings” of Christians who refuse all names or titles to distinguish them from other saints. (This was once our glory.) They have found a name to pit against all the names of Paul, Apollos and Cephas. They are “Christians gathered unto the

Name of the Lord Jesus," the Corinthian school of "Christ." My brethren, this is carnality. For myself "the old is better." The school of "Christ"—the "assemblies gathered unto the Name of the Lord Jesus"—I cannot endure. Rather let me be *one* with all that in every place call upon "the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours!"

I may be asked, "Are you not gathered to the Name of Christ?" Answer: "Not always, not distinctively." I am not "gathered" whilst writing these lines. *Always* a sheep of Christ's one flock; *sometimes* gathered with others for worship and fellowship, and then always, thank God, in *the* Name! Let me beg the reader to consider well Matt. xviii. 20 with its context, without reading into it what is not there. Let us now suppose a score of earnest Christians (Presbyterians and Episcopalians, Baptists and Methodists, Friends, and those who refuse all separating titles) who feel that the "Education Bill" tends to rob them of the liberty they have so long enjoyed, and is the thin end of the wedge which opens the passage to the woman on the scarlet beast. These men, we may suppose, are not at liberty to join in passive resistance, or to interfere with the government of the world, but they feel that if ever their prayers "for *all* men" were called for it is now. They are "gathered together" and "agree" in supplicating the throne of the heavenly grace. *In whose name are they gathered?* There is but one answer, as there is but *one* Name available before that throne. It is that Name that Elijah invoked for an undivided Israel on Mount Carmel; His whom we now know as our Lord Jesus, the one Name which secures every blessing asked in it to the

whole Church of God. Oh, let me ever be gathered, when gathered at all, in that Name! And what I prize so much myself let me not refuse to any saint of God.

The present use of this distinguishing title of a section of the Church is comparatively recent. Is the "gathering" also recent? In modern times Christians were not accustomed to meet in the way referred to before the second quarter of last century. Was there no gathering in Christ's Name between the early centuries of our era, and, say, 1826? Surely no Christian could be found who would affirm it. The Church early lost her hope—the return of her heavenly Bridegroom—and with it her separation from the world. She soon proved unfaithful to her crucified Lord, and was ruined as to her testimony and in her responsibility. Did the Lord leave Himself all those hundreds of years without even "two or three" gathered in His Name? Saints were gathered in the darkest ages, but in whose Name? Some of them "wandered about in sheep's skins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented." Did these, when driven into dens and caves, ever pray together? And in what Name? If in the name of Jupiter, or Astarte, or Mary, they might have gone out free. But confessors and martyrs for the Name which excludes all others, theirs was the fellowship of His sufferings. Rejoicing to share His rejection, their prayers, offered stealthily, and often interrupted by fire and sword, rose as sweet incense in *the* Name, and presented by the priestly hand, of Him who was dead and is alive again.

Priceless privilege this gathering in My Name! Much too precious to be accorded exclusively to any

of the fragments into which a testimony has been broken, which was truly the work of Him who is "wonderful in counsel and excellent in working." To us belong shame and confusion of face for the way in which we have cared for His work. Tell me, does gathering in Christ's Name belong to those of so-called "open" or "close" fellowship? Do not the leaders of each party claim it for themselves and refuse it to others? Must it be yielded to any *one* of the numerous bodies into which, alas! the once lovely witness raised of God to the glory of Christ and the privileges of the Church which is His body has been divided? If the theory underlying this denominational title be true, only *one* of those bodies can have the right to adopt it. And which? *A reductio ad absurdum* truly!

My brethren and whosoever among you feareth God, let us seek grace to cast our vain pretensions at the foot of the cross, and to take our place in humble confession before God. Our pride has grieved and stumbled many dear to God. It has turned aside many of them and of their children who might otherwise have been walking now amongst us in the comfort of the Holy Ghost. It is written in eternal truth, "God resisteth the proud;" woe to the man or the company whom God resists!

If half the energy which has been wasted on hatching and maintaining high ecclesiastical claims had been devoted to the Lord in making straight paths for our feet, in walking humbly, faithfully, and fruitfully with God, in seeking earnestly the blessing of the whole household of faith, and in winning souls for Christ, what a harvest of blessing we should have been reaping to-day!

It is to be feared that many have entered upon a path, which is really one of faith, without the brokenness of spirit which is *essential* to such a path. What should we say of a drunkard or a dishonest man who said he was convinced of his folly and was determined to turn over a new leaf—to lead a new life? Should we not be saddened by his self-righteousness? No repentance toward God! No need for the atoning blood or the life-giving Spirit! What shall we say then of a Christian who is convinced that his path has not been according to the Word of God, and therefore not pleasing to Him, who in like manner turned over a new leaf, and is determined to walk according to what he finds in Scripture? No bitter herbs! No confession! Is not this the very essence of self-righteousness? The *first* step is one of pride. And the subsequent course . . .? Does not this account for much of the pride and self-satisfaction seen among us? “Those that walk in pride He is able to abase.”

Deliverance by Dying.

[READINGS ON GALATIANS II. 19, 20].

“ For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.”

The law of God has relation to sin. Our deliverance, both as to sin and as to the law which deals with it, is by death. This deliverance could not be more complete ; for “ the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth.” But God expresses our perfect liberty in this wise :—“ How shall we, that died to sin, live any longer therein ? ” The *sins* we have committed our God forgives, because “ Christ also hath once suffered for sins.” The *sin*, inbred in our nature, He does not forgive : He “ *condemned* sin in the flesh.” Oh, the value of that perfect work wrought on Calvary both for God and for the sinner ! What a deliverance that we are not under the law, but under grace. Peace or liberty there is none for a soul under law. So far from it, the testimony is that “ as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse.” A child of God under the curse—what a contradiction it would be ! Impossible, altogether impossible for us to have had the relationship and the affections of children, if God had left us beneath the power and authority of the law !

“ Alive unto God.”

It was the will of God—the blessed purpose of His heart—not only that we should be delivered from sin and its awful consequences, from His wrath

abiding upon us, and the wrath which is to come, but that we might have our "fruit unto holiness." This is the positive side of our blessing in Christ. God has delivered us from this present evil world and all its doom. But He has left us here as witnesses of His grace, as "saints" in whom Christ is to be magnified—in whom God Himself is to find fruit. Only the grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ can produce fruit so fair. The Spirit of God, outpoured consequent upon the glory of the Redeemer on high, effectually does "what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh."

What a marvellous work was the first public action of that outpoured Spirit at Pentecost! Three thousand believing Jews go forth to almost every part of the world with a new life manifested before all in fruit unto God. The change from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God, which is seen in all who are born of the Spirit, is itself fruit unto God. When Thessalonian idolaters "became followers of us and the Lord, having received the Word with much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: so that ye became ensamples to all who believe in Macedonia and Achaia;" how sweet and fragrant the fruit unto God! Then was manifested a "work of faith and a labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ," all to His praise, whose will had been done in their sanctification, all to His praise, for whom now they wait, "even Jesus, who delivered them from the wrath to come."

Oh, for more conversions of this order! Oh, for more lives of this character in young converts and old believers! It was not only deliverance from idolatry and all the pollution that is in the world

throughout, but it was a walk, "even as He walked." It was a heavenly walk, soebly, but really after the model of the Son of God, whose meat it was to do the will of Him who sent Him. *He* went about doing good: so in measure do they. *He* was moved with compassion for the needy, hungry, perishing souls around Him. *They*, too, in their measure are centres of blessing in a world of sin. Out of *Him* flowed healing and blessing for even the guilty and ungrateful. Out of *them*, too, by the blessed Spirit within them, flow rivers of living water for the salvation and refreshment of the needy and guilty around them.

This is not the portion of Christ alone. The saints live of His risen life. We are "alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." God has delivered us from sin, and from the law which is "the strength of sin," that this life might move and have its being in a sphere of holy liberty. "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

Two things will ever characterise this life inwardly: (1) The enjoyment of God, and (2) the spirit of adoption.

(1) In the first part of Romans v. the Spirit of God leads the soul on to the highest point of blessing it can have here below before its God: "We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Justification before God, and consequent peace with Him—what blessing for God to give! How much for man to receive, even from a hand so bountiful! But though man might have been satisfied with such a portion, God could not be. He had set His

heart—blessed be His Name!—on lost and guilty man. He would bring him—

“ Nearer still, thro’ Jesus’ blood.”

He commends His own love towards us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Here GOD is revealed, His nature told out, His heart made known. And with what result for us? We are “reconciled to God by the death of His Son;” we are saved in all the power of the risen life of Christ, that blessed Son.

This mighty salvation gives us to “joy in God.” He is not too *righteous* for us to delight in Him. His righteousness has justified us (Rom. iii. 26). He is not too *holy*. We give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness. The *light* which He is has “shined in our hearts . . . the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” His *love* (and He is love) is “shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.” God fully revealed brings the sinner nigh—gives the believer liberty in His presence, boldness in the holiest. “We joy in God.” Not only is fear cast out by perfect love, but God becomes the joy of our hearts.

“ Thy gifts, O God, can ne’er suffice
 Unless Thyself be given ;
 Thy presence makes my paradise,
 And where Thou art is heaven.”

“ Whom have I in heaven but Thee ? ” “ Thus will I bless Thee while I live ; I will lift up my hands in Thy Name. My soul shall be satisfied as with

marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips, when I remember Thee upon my bed, and meditate on Thee in the night-watches" (Ps. lxxiii. 4-6). What a heaven upon earth is the heart that can "joy in God!" The wilderness of Judah may be a dry and thirsty land; not so the heart which has so learned God as to delight in Him. It "shall never thirst." Living unto God, the soul enjoys Him. "Holy and without blame," as seen in Christ, and soon to be so in every sense, it is "before Him in love." Precious purpose of God, and precious blood of Christ, which has made it good! Blessed risen life of Christ, and blessed grace of God that in it we "live unto God." O for hearts touched more deeply by such grace! O for ways formed by it!

"I have declared unto them Thy name," said the Lord Jesus, Himself the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father. He said it whilst dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. Who but He *knew* that bosom of love which passeth knowledge? Who but He could unfold its blessed secrets? He dwelt there in the repose of eternal love. Before the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy, the delight of the Father was the Son who lay in His bosom. That calm was undisturbed when He made the worlds. Nor was it broken when He came into the world. Though the humbled, lowly One here, He was owned of the Father as He began the public and active service of His life, and as, in a sense, He closed it, in sweetly memorable words: "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." From the moment when His *life*-service was owned, and

the Son of Man was wrapped in the cloud of the excellent glory, down to the cross, was but a second stoop of love and devotion: "As the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do." "Therefore doth the Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again" (John xiv. 31; x. 17).

How fitted He to declare the Father's name whilst still in this world (John iii. 13). Yet was the full adequate declaration of it only possible when Christ was risen. "I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them." He made good this word the third day after its utterance, when He bade Mary to go to His "brethren" and say "I ascend unto My Father and your Father." Redemption had wrought a mighty change. It had opened up for man an entirely new position. The Father's name is fully declared, and, through the finished and accepted work of Christ, the believer enters into the fruit of it. The love wherewith Christ is loved is in him, and Christ is in him. He lives unto God, a *child* before his *Father*.

How far, dear fellow-believer, how far have we apprehended the truth that our deliverance from the law and from sin is that we may enjoy God and taste the Father's love? Is the grace that has made us children of the ever-blessed Father deeply wrought into our hearts? Do we bless our God every day that He is truly our Father, and our Father according to the excellence of the relationship His own Son had down here in humiliation, and has on high as the exalted One? Does this close and tender relationship form our hearts and

our ways by its own unspeakable grace? Do the joys of the way and its sorrows come to us from a Father's hand? Are the mercies of our path and its trials fragrant to our hearts with the love that the Father bears Jesus, His Son, our Lord? Is the service we render the service of children whose hearts are fresh with the Father's love? And is the meanest work of daily life the service of an obedient and devoted child? As our God looks down into our hearts, does He see the answer to, and the reflection of, His own blessed love?

Satan, vanquished by the Lord as He entered upon His public service, returns in view of the cross to alarm the Lord, and to draw Him, if he could, from the path of full obedience, obedience "unto death, even the death of the cross." Up to this point His path was in the clear shining of His Father's smile. Rejection by man could not touch this. Hunger and poverty could not hide the smile that lighted a path through a world estranged from God. The homeless stranger might pass His night on the Mount of Olives while the creatures of His hand slept upon their beds. All was light and favour above. "I always do the things which please Him." "This voice came not because of Me, but for your sakes." He needed no voice to tell Him that He was there, and then, and ever the delight of His Father.

But now the dark shadows of the cross are on the path of the Lord, and Satan is there, as if with the last forlorn hope that the fear of death—death in all its dread reality as the judgment of God—might turn the One, who loved supremely the presence and smile of His Father, from a path which *must* lead into the darkness of the forsaking God. Who

shall tell the anguish of that holy soul? The "strong crying and tears," and "the sweat like great drops of blood, falling down to the ground," tell the tale as far as our poor hearts can take it in. How the heart bows, dumb before "this great sight!"

" When we see Thee in the garden
In Thine agony of blood,
At Thy grace we are confounded,
Holy spotless Lamb of God ! "

An angel strengthens the obedient Man, who became, in astounding grace, "a little lower than the angels."

Listen! "O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, THY WILL BE DONE." Satan is finally vanquished even in his stronghold—his goods are spoiled. The obedient One goes down to the cross. "But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence."

"Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." The first man dishonoured God, and lost everything by disobedience. The Second Man has honoured God supremely, and brought to His name a deeper glory, and a higher, than was possible in an earthly paradise. And He has won for man more than Adam lost. "By the obedience of One shall many be made righteous."

The law has no claim upon a dead man; sin has no authority over him. In the death which God has executed upon the believer in the death of Christ the believer has passed out of the condition and sphere

in which he lived. Was that condition one of guilt? He is *dead*; no guilt can attach itself to a dead man. He may have been guilty in life, but he is dead. Was he responsible before God to keep His holy law? A *dead* man cannot be responsible. When he comes out in a new life *this* life has its responsibilities, and the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit to answer to them. But the law is for men living their natural life before God—alas! a fallen and rebellious life. This life for the believer exists no more; he is dead. God bids him to *reckon* himself to be dead indeed unto sin. It is so, but there is great danger that he should fail to reckon it. Hence the solemn injunction.

What blessing for us is this! As the Father looks down upon those in whom He has put His love—the same love He bears Christ—He sees the same eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us. He saw its lovely manifestations at the well of Sychar, near the pool of Siloam, at the gate of Nain, “at the table” at Bethany, in the temple at Jerusalem. Who shall tell what the sight was to the Father of our Lord Jesus in His sanctuary on high? The sweet savour of that perfect life never failed in that holy place, whilst Jesus tabernacled amongst men. What fellowship of untold love, of perfect delight, between the hallowed courts on high and the hallowed place where Jesus walked in lowly grace! God’s good pleasure was indeed with men. With what delight does the Father now see that eternal life in His dear children! With what satisfaction does He enjoy its sweet savour, as it now reaches the sanctuary from hearts which He has formed for Himself!

And what answer, dearly beloved, have our hearts

to all this? Should not our answer be a heart wholly given up to Christ, and ways which tell that He is dwelling there by faith? May our God work effectually in our souls to call forth this answer in an ever growing measure by His good Spirit which dwelleth in us!

It is a risen One who lives in us a life in a new sphere and in new and holy and eternal relations. The old sphere where sin reigned unto death is left behind. The sphere of the law's divine authority lies on the other side of the cross and grave of Christ. Where the risen Christ lives, grace reigns—not on the ruins of a broken law, but consequent upon its being magnified above all human thought—not with sin still before the eye of God, but “through righteousness [manifested in its eternal judgment in the death of Christ] unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

“At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you” (John xiv. 20). That day is come with its unutterable blessing for the children of God. We are *in* Christ; it is our new and eternal place before God. He has put us there, and there He sees us. But Christ is *in us* too. Christ the risen One, Christ alive for evermore, Christ “declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead;” Christ is *in us, our Life*. Not only is He the eternal life which was with the Father, not only is He the One who can say “I am in the Father,” but He is truly *in us* by the Holy Spirit. It is thus that in the highest and fullest sense “old things are passed away; behold all things are become new. And all things are of God.”

Doubtless we shall live this blessed life above. Its sphere, its home, is there Christ who is our life is already there. It is His Father's house—ours too, *because* He has entered it for us. But we live this life now, though it is indeed a life away from home, a life in the midst of circumstances altogether opposed to it. Faith will not be needed when the rest of God is come and we have entered it. But for this life to be manifested in our mortal flesh—this indeed calls for a simple and earnest faith. It is our calling, it is our unspeakable privilege, that the eternal life which we have in the knowledge of God revealed in His blessed Son should be daily manifested in our mortal body; that “what we now live in the flesh” should be “by the faith of the Son of God.”

But what is the faith of the Son of God? It is that which lays hold of His fulness, and brings it into the soul. It is that which apprehends the beauty and grace of His path down here, and feeds upon Him as the heavenly Manna. It is that which bows adoringly as it contemplates His obedience unto death, and is so nourished upon Him there and thus as to bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus; it is so strengthened as to love the fellowship of His sufferings. It is that which beholds Him as He is glorified on high, and is being changed into the same image from glory to glory. It is that which brings CHRIST into every detail of doing and suffering, of service and communion in our pilgrimage, that judges of everything by Christ (Phil. i.), that loves and brings into the soul the mind which was in Christ Jesus (Phil. ii.). It is that by which those who abide in Him walk as He

also walked. It is the faith which is *from* the Son of God, its blessed Giver, which returns *to* the Son of God, its single, absorbing, exclusive object, and which owes all its character and all its power to the Son of God.

The eternal Son of God, *as such*, was never under the law. And when His stupendous stoop of purest grace brought Him under it, as born of a woman, born under the law, He not only magnified it His life long, but He bore its curse in His death. He was "made a curse for us." By resurrection He was declared Son of God with power. The veil had been rent as He expired, and His cry in that solemn hour, "It is finished," is now answered by a rolled-away stone and an empty grave. His undisputed victory gives Him those He is not ashamed to call "brethren" as the sharers of His victory and companions of His glory. Impossible to bring the risen Son of God or those given to Him by His Father under the law. "*Faith is come*" (Gal. iii. 25). By it we enter into the blessed fruits of His death. We are in Him as the risen One, and He is in us. The power of His resurrection is our triumphant deliverance, our eternal blessing. We enter into it by faith—*the faith of the Son of God*.

"*Who loved me and gave Himself for me.*"

What words are these from the lips and pen of the chief of sinners, snatched from the wrath to come in the hour when his mad and wicked rage was touching its highest point! What words for us to repeat with hearts throbbing their unspoken praise!

And did the Son of God love Saul of Tarsus? Was His eye upon him in compassion, in tenderest

sovereign love, as the clothes of Stephen's murderers lay at his feet? Fathomless love! Love possible only in the bosom of the Son of God!

Those who had deliberately refused the miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by the Lord Jesus, sinned against the Holy Ghost who shone on Stephen's face. Those who boasted that their great law-giver's face shone with the reflected glory of Jehovah, refused the *same* light when it testified that Jesus is Jehovah. The wickedness of man had reached its deepest depth. And Saul presided at that bloody scene! He consented to the death of a man in whose face the light of heaven beamed, a man moreover whose only crime was his relations with Jesus the Son of God.

It is permitted to us now to turn from earth with its gnashing of teeth upon the follower of Christ, and its stoning of that shining face—to turn to heaven, and learn its choicest thoughts. At the right hand of the Majesty there, Jesus stands to receive the spirit of His beloved and honoured witness. The circle which is filled with joy when one sinner repenteth was moved with fresh delight as the *standing* Jesus received that thrice happy spirit. Man had done his worst, and that "worst" was to put to sleep the object of his hatred. Hatred is never satisfied. It gnaws the heart in which it dwells. The unhappy murderers leave the scene of their wild and cruel rage with gnawings of hell in their bosoms. But love in its home above kept high feast at that selfsame moment. Ere the devout men had raised for its burial the disfigured body but lately bright with the light of Jehovah-Jesus' face, the released spirit was received into

the arms of eternal love. It gazes, satisfied, on the face of Jesus. The joy of Jesus, like the flow of David's loving tears, exceedeth! He has more joy in receiving Stephen to the paradise of God than Stephen has in finding himself "present with the Lord." But LOVE IS SATISFIED—love in its full fountain in that eternal heart, and love in its blessed stream in that ransomed spirit.

From that height the eye of the Son of God is upon the chief of the persecutors as the mortal scene closes and as each takes up his clothes. Eyes as a flame of fire indeed, and yet full of unspeakable love! He looks down upon the blasphemer, the persecutor, the injurious man, not to take speedy vengeance, not to cry, "Depart, thou cursed, into everlasting fire." No, blessed Son of God! Thoughts of peace and not of evil are Thine towards Saul of Tarsus Thine enemy!

And is there not a clear, sweet-sounding echo in our hearts, beloved? Is there not more than an echo? Does not the fresh ministry of Christ to our hearts now call forth with renewed love this hallowed cry, "Who loved me, and gave Himself for me?" A cry sweetly personal! Had *I* been the only sinner to be redeemed to God by blood, Jesus my Saviour would have come, would have lived and died for me—would have poured out His soul unto death on my behalf! *I* was before His eye—each child of grace can say—*I* was dear to His heart as He said, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God."

Beloved brethren, with a heart moved as this priceless love and its precious fruits pass before the mind, let me press upon you the practical bearing

of all this. "What I now live in the flesh," says the apostle, "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Shall we not seek in a deeper measure this present, abiding sense of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge? Shall we not seek that our hearts may be led captive by it; that our ear, our hand, our foot, sanctified by the sprinkled blood and anointing oil, may be given up entirely to Him who died for us and rose again?

Jesus, Son of God! take these feeble hearts, fill them with Thy PERFECT LOVE, work in them mightily by Thy good Spirit that, as Thou livest in us, so what we now live in the flesh may be by the faith of the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us.

The Lord Jesus Tempted.

In thus considering Him it becomes us to tread softly with reverence and godly fear. It is holy ground. His name is "Wonderful." It was before *His* glory that Seraphim hid their faces and cried, Holy, Holy, Holy.

We recall with worship that "No one knoweth the Son but the Father" (Matt. xi. 27 and Luke x. 22). This is absolute and final. When it is said, "Neither knoweth anyone the Father save the Son," it is immediately added, "and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." The Son can and does reveal the Father to whom *He will*. But the mysterious Person of the Son the Father alone knows. May these solemn words sink into our hearts! May they rebuke—nay, *prevent* any tendency to repeat the sin of the men of Bethshemesh! May it be ours reverently to bow before the Ark of God, the Person of Christ! How many have erred here, and have taken occasion of the gracious humiliation of the Lord, to say of Him things which the only One who knows His holy and mysterious Being never said! May both writer and reader humbly cover their faces, bow at His feet, and worship Him as the thrice holy Jehovah! For such He was, and is, and is to come. Not less so in the days of His flesh, than "of old, from the days of eternity" (Mic. v. 2, *marg.*). He is here spoken of as "the judge of Israel," smitten "with a rod upon the cheek;" for indeed He *gave* (else no one could have *taken*) His back to smiters. . . . hid not His face from shame and spitting

(Isa. l. 6). But when we turn to the Gospels (John xviii. 5, 6), we find that the "Wonderful," the "I am" is there in all His glory, however much He has veiled that glory. Impossible that He could ever be less than God over all, blessed for evermore ! His very humiliation attests his Being. Who but God could humble himself ? God could humble a man to the condition of one that "did eat grass as oxen" (Dan. iv. 33) ; but the creature is powerless to change the place in nature which God has given him.

In considering our blessed Lord undergoing temptation, let us ever have the dignity of His holy Person before our eye—nay, indelibly written of God in the depths of our heart ! May He be, even as born of a woman, "that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God !" When we contemplate Him as a tempted or weary man in all that holy life, may we always remember "that He was manifested to take away our sins ; and in Him is no sin." O Thou whose name is "Wonderful," may we hear Thee saying, when face to face with Nicodemus : "The Son of Man which is *in* heaven !" And when Thy days are "shortened," when Thou art the Messiah "cut off" in the midst of Thy days, may we, with bowed heads and worshipping hearts, hear our God saying, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Thine hands : they shall perish ; but Thou remainest ; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment ; and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed ; but THOU ART THE SAME !" (Ps. cii., Heb. i.).

Let us reverently turn to Heb. iv. 15 : The Holy Ghost here brings before us, "Jesus, the Son of God,"

as our great High Priest. He is only such as passed into the heavens, for on earth He was not a Priest. Having by " His own blood entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us," He appears there as our Priest. Past suffering Himself, He is able to succour those whose cause He maintains when they are passing through suffering. He has been tempted ; He is able to sympathise with tempted ones. This is so precious a truth that our hearts may well seek to learn its blessed scope as it is here given us in a few pregnant words. Although the title of our High-Priest here is " Jesus, the Son of God," yet we are led to the immediate consideration of Him, as " touched with the feeling of our infirmities."

He has passed through sufferings and temptation, such as His people are now called to pass through. He has felt them in all their reality ; but He has felt them according to God. He has known what hunger is, for He has been forty days without food—a *man*. He has been in a storm raised by Satan for His destruction, and knows what many a tempest-tossed believer experiences. He has been weary with His journey taken because of the rejection of His own people, and can feel with and for those who are tired, lonely, and outcasts. That all these trials found nothing within of sin only magnifies the sense of His perfection. It would not have helped the saint of to-day if these trials had found a murmuring, a lustful, or a rebellious heart. *It could not be.* But if it could, it would not have rendered Him more able to sympathise with and to succour the tempted saint. For what we need—nay, what as saints we desire—is not one to sympathise with our sin, but to

sympathise *with us* in the trials and temptations that come upon us in a sinful world. In Heb. ii. 18 it is said, "in that He Himself has suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." A holy one "suffers" when tempted. If the tempted one be not holy, the temptation may cause no suffering, because the heart goes with the temptation: lust within answers but too well to the temptation without. But "Jesus, the Son of God," has been truly tempted, and has truly "suffered," for every disposition and thought of His heart was not only pure, but a sweet savour to God. In the passage which is occupying us we read, "but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Dr. Anderson in his work, "The Gospel and its Ministry," has a note upon this which so well expresses what I have long felt to be the truth that I will quote it. "Our English version is ambiguous here, and the words have been generally perverted to mean that the Lord's temptations were exactly similar to ours, the *result* alone being different. Were this so, He must have known the power of sin within—the source of so many trials. But the words are *χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας*, apart from sin. 'So that throughout these temptations in their origin, in their process, in their result,—sin had nothing in Him: He was free and separate from it!'—Alford."

How well for us that God Himself says that "such an High-Priest became us, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens!" That He has stooped low enough to be the subject of temptation—of real temptation, Satan suggesting a line of conduct which His holy eye detected to be sinful, and which His

holy heart turned from with " suffering " at the very suggestion, is indeed grace unspeakable. That He has thus, if we may say so, qualified Himself to be a merciful and faithful High-Priest, to sympathise with and succour our poor feeble hearts when they are tempted ; this is indeed grace to help in time of need.

But let us reverently look at our blessed Lord in some of the actual temptations which He endured. This will shew better than anything at once how perfect He was under the trial, and how able He is to sympathise with us in such temptations. See Him in St. Matthew's Gospel (iv. 1-11). We are in the very atmosphere of reality. Jesus has just been owned by a voice from heaven, as " My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," and the Holy Ghost descending like a dove rests upon Him. The godly remnant in Israel had been confessing their sins in John's baptism. Christ had no sins to confess, yet would He associate Himself with the first movement of the Spirit of God in those who are confessing their sins. " Thus," He says, " it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." How heaven is transferred to earth as the lowly Jesus comes up out of the water ! Ineffable scene of holy communion ! It is the Father's joy to own His beloved Son. It is the Holy Ghost's delight to rest upon His head. The Godhead has unspeakable communion in the redemption of fallen man. The " Wonderful," who is the blessed agent in that redemption, free from all sin, and from all tendency thereto in the body which has been prepared for Him, is the centre of that blessed communion. From—nay, *in*—that atmosphere He is led into temptation. But let it be carefully remarked He is led by the Holy Spirit. A garden had been the

scene of the first man's temptation ; but here it is the wilderness. In Adam's case there was everything outwardly to witness that God loved and cared for him. The Second Man is surrounded by no such testimony, but by the wild beasts of the desert. After fasting forty days He feels the pangs of hunger. Then and thus the tempter comes to Him. All is reality here. A hungry man in a wilderness surrounded by wild beasts, the Lord is face to face with God's enemy and man's. The strong man in his armour must now be met by Him who " when He had fasted forty days and forty nights was afterwards an hungered." The stake is the glory of God in the redemption of fallen man. Who shall say how angels beheld that wondrous conflict ! Who shall tell what it was to God in His Sanctuary ! " If Thou be the Son of God ! " Forty days previously a voice from heaven had owned Him such ; but they had been forty days of fasting, forty days in which no raven or angel had been commissioned to minister food to the dependent man. Did it look like a Father's care ? This was the terrible suggestion of the tempter. In Eden, in the garden of delights where everything spake of God's tenderness in providing care, the first man had fallen a too ready prey to such a suggestion. And now in the hard, cold wilderness, how will the Second Man bear Himself ? " If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." The temptation is awfully real. But it neither meets nor raises a suspicion, as it had done in the first Adam, that God's love was not perfect. God forbid the thought that there was no temptation, because that temptation found no response ! Let not our unbelieving hearts doubt the great High-Priest's

aptitude for sympathy and succour, because when the suggestion was made that the Father did not perfectly love Him, His heart abode in the undisturbed consciousness of the love, which it had been the Father's joy to express and His to feel, in the sacred communion of forty days before. The heart worships as it hears from His lips, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Yes, He is a Man, and so am I. Because He has been a man in temptation He can fully enter into the hour of my temptation. Did the tempter find only perfection in Him? That perfection renders Him the more suited for me in my frailty, and with my sinful nature. If He has perfectly trusted God, when everything seemed against Him, He as a merciful and faithful High-Priest can fortify my heart with a holy confidence in God when circumstances seem all against me. "Man shall not live by bread alone." God has other ways of shewing His care, other ways of Divine wisdom. It is a man's place to hang upon God. If it had not been a world of sin, the Saviour would not have been here; if it is a world of sin, God's footsteps are in the great deep. Blessed be His name, they are in the Sanctuary too, and Christ was there. "By every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Till the word shall proceed from that mouth which bids Him who has taken the "form of a servant" to eat, the obedient One will not eat, but *trust* Him who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working. What a model for us! Thank God, the tempted Man in His perfection has become a merciful and faithful High-Priest for us, sympathising as perfectly as in temptation He suffered.

The second temptation is still more subtle. The first, I think, was addressed to Christ as a man, the second to him as Messiah. The tempter seeing the reverence which the Man, Christ Jesus, had for the Word of God, now proceeds to quote Scripture as authority. He takes advantage of a promise to Messiah in Ps. xci., and suggests that He should put God to the test, and see if He would be as good as His Word. This, by the way, has been greatly misunderstood. It has been represented as a temptation to trust God *too much*. But it is not thus that man can tempt God. To see whether God will do what He has promised is not a sign of too much faith. It is unbelief tempting God. But in vain the devil says "It is written" to Him, of whom it is testified—"Thy law is within My heart." His eye at once detects the Satanic *mis*-quotation of Holy Scripture. Had the enemy quoted the Word as God had given it, it would have been an authoritative direction for the Messiah to act upon. But an essential part is left out, "to keep Thee *in all Thy ways*." This would not have served Satan's purpose. He wished to lead the blessed Man of God's counsels, His Messiah, away from the place of entire dependence which in grace He had taken. "Cast Thyself down" was not "His way," and in "His way" the obedient Man was fully purposed to walk. It was one of Satan's deadliest wiles, supported by a misquotation of the Word of God. The heart listens humbly, reverently, confidingly, for the answer of Christ. In lowly grace He takes it again from Deuteronomy,—a just quotation from the Word of the living God, binding upon man, and the very food of God's Messiah: "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt

the Lord thy God." How perfectly the blessed Lord is in the true attitude of a man of every child of faith in a world of sin ! How truly He has suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should tread in His steps ! And how He has fitted Himself to succour those that are tempted !

In the third temptation the devil throws off his mask, and the blessed Lord treats him as an "adversary," just as He did later in the days of His flesh, when Peter lent himself to be Satan's mouth-piece to the same intent. See Matt. xvi. 21-23. How terrible the temptation we can scarcely understand. On the path of Messiah to God's holy hill of Zion lay the cross in all its terrible reality. It was a glory of dazzling brightness that lay beyond that cross, but it *was* beyond the cross that it lay. The "sure mercies of David" could only be His in resurrection. Between Him and that "path of life" He knew the awful wail must arise, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me." The tempter shews Him a smiling bypath to the throne, as later by Peter's lips he said, "Spare Thyself." If He would only do homage for His possessions to Satan, the kingdoms of the world should be His. All in vain for One who asked only what was the will of God ! All in vain for Him in whose heart was God's law ! But because it was God's law that was there, and not the lust of glory or ease, was it therefore no temptation ? We must wait for the light of another day fully to know *how* He "suffered being tempted." It is our privilege to bow low at His feet, and worship before His Majesty in the heavens where He is to-day maintaining our cause—a merciful and faithful High-Priest "touched with the feeling of our

infirmities." "Get thee hence, Satan," is now the Victor's word. He has overcome by "It is written." It is His to exalt the Word of God ; His to hold on in the form of a servant with the words : "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." The temptation ended, and not before, "angels minister to Him."

St. Luke tells us that the devil "departed from Him for a season," and St. John records his single return, ch. xiv. 30. Can Satan get a victory in view of the path of darkness and woe that now lay before the Lord Jesus? Immediately after the Lord was sealed for His service down here, Satan had sought to turn Him from the path of obedience by the most subtle wiles, and by every allurements ; he had completely failed, and he knew it. He had met One in weakness, stronger than he ; he returned from the contest consciously vanquished. He had found *one* Man who sought nothing but the will of God. But now was there not an opportunity that offered some promise of success? The obedience of Christ so far had been the most blessed communion with His Father's joy and love. As He had lain upon the Mount of Olives, the homeless outcast, what a feast of the Father's love and intimacy was spread for Him in the still silence of a scene, "from earthly joys apart!" How the Father was with Him as He sat weary and lonely, the rejected of men at the well of Sychar! Ah yes, blessed Lord, Thou didst say, "The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places," because Jehovah was the portion of Thine inheritance and of Thy cup!

Obedience always leads man in a path marked by the light and joy of communion with God. There

is one terrible exception. The Lord Jesus was now in full view of it, and Satan might think that at last he had a chance. Obedience was leading the Lord surely and soon into darkness and abandonment. To continue upon that path ; to accomplish to the full the will of God which He had come to do must lead His soul into the darkness of one forsaken of God. Because of man's sin "the prince of this world" had the power of death, but he could not use that power upon the Lord Jesus Christ. He "hath nothing in Me." How divinely true of Him ! Alone of all the sons of men He could say it. If there had been sin there the power of death might have been used upon Him. But His death, if He dies, will be as His life had completely been, an act of obedience. Every other death has been the fruit of disobedience. His death, if He continues as He will surely do, the path upon which He has entered, will be simple obedience, pure love to the Father, a whole burnt offering for the heart of God ! "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father" (Jno. x. 17, 18).

But if Satan can do nothing against the Lord Jesus with the *power* of death, he can use the *fear* of death to alarm the Saviour's soul, and to present his final temptation to leave the path of obedience. That sinless soul could not but shrink from being made sin. To fear death as the judgment of God was His piety (Heb. v. 7). Satan was never more satanic. Heartlessly he detects, maliciously he seizes the

dread occasion. The anguish of the temptation was outwardly expressed by the agony of Gethsemane. "His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." What it *inwardly* was we shall in measure learn when our bodies shall have been changed to the likeness of His body of glory, and we hear from His own lips in the heavenly glory *something* of "the decease which He accomplished at Jerusalem."

Need I dwell upon the reality of the temptation? There never was anything more real in this world. Could He who delighted supremely and only in the light of His Father's countenance continue to tread a path which must end in the forsaking of God? The counsels of God's grace required it, the very glory of God necessitated it. "Father, glorify Thy name."

There are times when worship must be silent. Even Jehovah's joy is silent (Zeph. iii. 17, *marg.*). And here words utterly fail. Silent, prostrate, adoring, we listen: "But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave Me commandment *even so I do.*"

Perfect love! Perfect obedience! And both made known in that death from which Satan, by his wiles and allurements, seeks to turn the Lord Jesus. He will make it known in the whole universe that, fearing the darkness, the distance and desertion of the Cross, He nevertheless loves the Father with unswerving and measureless love. All *His* counsels shall have effect. Those *He* gave to Christ shall be redeemed. *His* will shall be done in earth as it is in heaven. The "*glory of God the Father*" shall be supreme through Christ Jesus, "obedient unto death, yea, the death of the Cross."

The Lord has overcome. The awful cross still is before Him ; but there He will in effect " destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." There He will finish the victory

" That needs no second fight,
That leaves no second foe."

And now, in closing, does not the heart feel strengthened for any temptation? Has not the Good Shepherd gone before His sheep, met the foe and vanquished him? Has He not become a High-Priest, " touched with the feeling of our infirmities? " Has He not been in all points tempted like as we are apart from sin? Is He not the " seed of Abraham," truly a man in the presence of God for us? In that sacred body has He not suffered being tempted? Is He not capable of fully feeling with us, who pass through the same scene of sorrow with like temptations, with the same malicious, wily foe? And is it not a *rock* beneath our feet in temptation, to know that our High-Priest, Jesus the Son of God, is He who has overcome Satan by an absolute trust in God, and *shown* that " IN HIM IS NO SIN? " God help us to value Him more ! May He give us to make better use of One so divinely fitted to meet all our need !

The Coming of Christ for the Church.

EXTRACTED FROM A LECTURE DELIVERED IN 1877.

“I will come again.” If our hearts are not engaged in it, His heart is; and if we love Him because He first loved us, thank God, we long to be with Him, because, He in grace has longed to have us with Him. “I will come again.” Simple word, sure word, upon which the heart stands in triumph and waits for Christ! Circumstances around may be trying; the path may be difficult; the Saviour’s absence may be felt—*ought* to be felt; it is night whilst He is away; but He has said in faithful love “I will come again.” He has not said when, but He has bidden us to watch. He has said that it might be “at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning.” He has left room for a delay; but He has encouraged and bidden the heart of His beloved disciples to wait for Him from the moment He left them. And this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning us. He would have our hearts ever waiting for Him to “come again” in the same love which brought Him down to die for us

And mark what the blessedness is that He sets before us, “That where I am, there ye may be also.” Others may picture what heaven will be; others may speak of its pleasures, of its occupations, of its glories, of its joys. Christ speaks out of the fulness of a heart that LOVES, and that counts upon our love for Himself: “That where I am, there ye may be

also." Surely that is enough for your hearts! Blessed be God, a goodly number here can answer, "Yes, Lord, that is all I desire; let me be with Thee where Thou art, and my cup of joy is more than full!"

And that is all we know about that blessed place to which the Lord is coming to receive us: it is His Father's house. We shall be children at home, and He Himself shall be the centre of our gathering there. God would fix every eye upon His Person—the once suffering One by whom He brings many sons to glory, the One "who loved me and gave Himself for me."

When the Lord actually leaves the disciples, the promise is renewed by the angels who speak to them on that occasion. In Acts i. 9 we read, "A cloud received Him out of their sight." That cloud was the symbol of God's presence in Israel—a familiar symbol which every one understood. In the account of the transfiguration, it is said, "They feared as they entered into the cloud." They knew that it was Jehovah's presence which overshadowed them. The cloud receives the Saviour out of their sight. "And while they stood gazing steadfastly into heaven, two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." When we come to details, this passage will speak to us of the Lord's return actually to the earth, but I read it for the present to shew that it is the same Jesus who has gone up into heaven, who will return thence to receive His own to Himself. If He is

taken up and the cloud receives Him out of their sight, they are to look for this *same* Jesus in *like* manner. It is upon that cloud that we shall join Him, "and so shall be for ever with the Lord"—with *this same Jesus*.

Now, there can be no uncertainty here for the soul that is simple and that bows to the Word of God. There can be no mistake: "I will come again," says the Lord before the Cross, "I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also;" and now "This same Jesus shall so come in like manner." How did He go away? Was it not personally? Was it not bodily? He will return then personally and bodily; the Jesus with the marks of the nails in His hands and in His feet, His side pierced in death for us. Just before His ascension He could say to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands. Reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless but believing." Of some it is said, "They shall look on Me whom they have pierced," so truly is it "the same Jesus," and so really shall He come "in like manner."

In Luke xxiv. 50 we read, "And He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. And it came to pass while He blessed them, He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God." The last impression left upon the eyes of the disciples was the Lord's hands uplifted in blessing—His pierced hands! "He will so come in like manner." The first sight that you and I through grace will have of Him will

be the same Jesus, His hands uplifted in blessing. They were raised in blessing as He went, they are still raised in blessing—the ever-living One appearing for us in the presence of God, whose hands (unlike those of another mediator) never grow weary, never need to be upheld. He shall return with His hands still raised in blessing. But who shall tell the rapture of our hearts when beneath the shadow of those uplifted hands we gaze upon that face, once marred more than any man's; and when we know from the blessed word of God already dwelling in our hearts, "And they shall go no more out!" It is unclouded blessing! It is His own presence in unhindered communion! It is eternal blessing! "And they shall go no more out."

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